

Once Upon A Lifetime *in Baker County, Florida*



James B. Matthews
Editor of the Baker County
Standard 1890 - 1903



By La Viece Moore-Fraser Smallwood
Volume 3

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LA VIECE SMALLWOOD
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See story of Historic Franklin Mercantile on page 173

COVER PHOTOS - Left to right from top:

John Decator McCormack & wife Lillie (Leigh) McCormick.

Turn of the century College Street.

Sidney & Eva (Sauls) Williams.

Kizzie Smith Fish, America Dinkins Raulerson, Mrs. Conner.

Horace Williams.

James B. Matthews.

John T. "Sankie" Groves place - home of John Decator McCormack & wife Lillie.

Georgia Johns Dicks holding Boston, standing - son Denver.

Once Upon A Lifetime
in Baker County, Florida



**Fifth Street looking north B&P, Gothe Buildings,
corner of Citizens State Bank, Howell Store, unkn,
Old Railroad Depot out of sight to right**

THIRD EDITION

BY

La Viece (Moore-Fraser) Smallwood

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1995

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INTRODUCTION

In the early years of teaching journalism at the then-new state university -- the University of North Florida -- in Jacksonville, La Viece Smallwood appeared in one of the writing classes. Pleasant and unassuming, she had a sparkle in her eyes and an eagerness that became contagious for the rest of the class. She was already an accomplished columnist for *The Florida Times-Union* so my task was really to help her polish her work.

In the years since, I have followed her columns, maintained her friendship and enjoyed reading her books about Baker County and its residents.

La Viece's Baker County books reveal two striking assets -- she is a lively, intuitive interviewer and a remarkable story-teller.

Interviewing is a formidable word to most writers. It can be difficult, because many people do not want to talk to reporters or writers. "I've never been quoted correctly yet!" was the response I received early in my career as a newspaperman when I went to interview some authority figure.

A good interviewer is one who can get people to feel at ease and to talk candidly about a given subject. As her stories attest, La Viece has that special knack for getting people to relax and have a conversation with her. What singles her out today is that she isn't starting an interview with a preconceived idea of "digging out the dirt." Instead, she is intent on having her interviewees -- such a formal word! -- tell their stories and she faithfully records them.

La Viece is that special person who is a superb storyteller. She doesn't thrust herself into the stories as so many are wont to do; she gets her interviewees to sit back and reminisce, to bring to life olden days so that pictures of bygone lives will live on in memory as well as printed page.

In universities today, this technique has the “high-falutin” name of “oral history.” This is certainly history but it is even more than that -- these are stories of early lives, of a way of life that is passing by. The stories reflect hardship, the ethic of hard work, and days of simpler joys. Each is a story of families building and growing together. Each is a story of faith.

La Viece’s stories are warm with human emotion and alive with anecdotes of lives lived in barren as well as fruitful times. There are lessons to be learned if young ones will take the time to read. There is humor here; there are tears, as well.

These are stories best enjoyed sitting on a front-porch rocking chair at sunset, or a living room chair as a fireplace sends out warmth in winter.

William J. Roach

Professor Emeritus of Journalism and Communications

University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida

February 4, 1995

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Dedicated to Bill Wilford

..... whose spiritual blessings and encouragement helped me endure the most challenging and traumatic year of my life, while he was undergoing the most challenging and traumatic year of his life.

His consistent prayers, counsel and wisdom will never be forgotten and it is my hope and faith that our friendship will continue throughout eternity.



La Viece and Bill

IN HONOR AND GRATEFUL APPRECIATION
to
My maternal grandparents

Thomas Brantly "Tom" Fraser
16 September 1883–20 September 1974

and

Rosanna LeNora "Rosie" Roberts
17 April 1887–8 April 1960



Their love and devotion has been
an invaluable sustaining force
in my life.

I shall forever be grateful for
their confidence in me
that inspired the courage
for me to be, with faith in God,
who and what I am today.

AN OPEN LETTER

For more than 4 decades I have been writing about people, many of whom share deep roots in the soil of my Baker County forefathers.

There is a certain amount of emotion that can't be described when you enter someone's private life. I have relied on my God-given talents and love of people to capture in part a microscopic glimpse into these long and prolific lives. I have tried to secure, in part, for their posterity, those who might never meet them in person, an impression of their versatile personalities. Since I am known to write as I speak, the interviews have been recorded just as our conversation took place. In all cases, the person, and/or members of their family, have been allowed to read the story before publication to assure accuracy and also to bring me the assurance that the narrative has been told in a manner acceptable to them.

Many of the interviewees have passed on, and some of the personal things I recorded are the only expressions about their life chronicled. I owe so much to those of you who have allowed me the privilege of visiting in your homes, who have talked forthrightly about your own life without the least bit of inhibition. Many of you have said to me, "I don't know why anyone would want to know my story, I've never done anything important," and all the while you have been molding lives, being a good neighbor, working hard to make an honest living and making do with what you had, without complaining. You have feared God enough to live honest, upright, just lives and have left a proud legacy for your posterity. And even those of you who have told me about past transgressions have shown great humility. Mistakes are something all of us make, and I have understood how you feel about them, especially when there is a story of your life being written.



In some instances I have recorded them with your approval, and in others they have been left unsaid because they were not the real issue.

My greatest desire is that your life will not be forgotten. Too many of our Baker County forefathers lie in unmarked graves; records and incidents in their lives are lost forever because no history has been preserved. If this desire is reached, then I shall have fulfilled a sincere desire of writing something of significance that perhaps could help change, for the better, the lives of those who read this work.

In the last chapter of Malachi, the final Old Testament prophecy is recorded in verses five and six. It is my firm and honest belief that these stories will share in this prophecy, and I feel humble indeed that I have had the privilege and joy of being a part of my Heavenly Father's work -- for He said:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

I am truly very grateful to each of you for sharing a small glimpse into your life with me, and others, for now we can know just how it was *Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County, Florida.*

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "LaViece". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Cincinnati Dicks Mobley

August 1994

"I took in washing to pay for my washing machine. We had to put it on the back porch. My three rinse tubs were in the yard. I pumped water from a pitcher pump to fill them and then had to take the clothes up and down the steps to rinse them."

Cincinnati Mobley

Cincinnati Dicks Mobley is the authentic model of an extinct class of southern women. She represents a bygone era of uniqueness that defies description and challenges the writer to the limit of characterization. Wealth and fortune, prosperity and affluence were her fate, yet they are concealed in a remote area of her thoughts. Her glory lies in the homage she feels for her husband, children, friends, faith and family heritage, not necessarily in that order, because somehow this distinctive lady has woven them all into one majestic tapestry that embraces her heart and symbolizes her nature.

Charlton Mobley brought his bride to a newly constructed home after their marriage on April 3, 1935. Today, very little change is detectable at 222 West Macclenny Avenue, although 60 momentous years have passed into oblivion. It's what you can't see that has lasted, like the legendary memories and tangible character of the special people who lived in her past, and experienced together the tears, the laughter, the triumphs and tragedies. This is their story because they are Cincinnati's life.

Cincinnati Dicks was born February 3, 1914 to Thomas and Georgia Satilla Johns Dicks of Columbia County and she is often asked to explain the unusual family names.

"My mother, who was the daughter of John Marshall and Mary Mills Johns of Columbia County, was named Georgia for the state, and Satilla for the river," she said. "When she and daddy started naming

their children, they had a little trouble deciding on a name. My father sat down on the trunk in their room with a magazine after mama gave birth and said, 'I'll find the baby a name in this magazine'. It just so happened it was published in a place called Augusta, Maine, so daddy asked mama how she liked Maine and she said that it was all right, so that's how my brother Maine got his name," she said.

"They named me before I was born because they agreed the first girl would be Cincinnati," she continued. "Then one day after I was born, daddy carried mama into Lake City from the farm in a horse-drawn buggy, and they stopped somewhere along the way to show a neighbor named Mrs. Hancock their new baby. Mrs. Hancock said, 'Mrs. Dicks, if you ever have another little girl, name her Alabama'. So, Mama named my sister Alabama."

Thomas and Georgia were parents of seven children. The five who lived to adulthood were Maine, who died at age 12 of Hodgkin's Disease; Cincinnati; Spain; Thomas, who died at age two of burns after he fell in hot water; Alabama; Denver and Boston.

Looking back, she tells the story of how her grandfather, Joseph Dicks, left his native land in Liverpool, England:

"In those days, boys were taught a trade and my grandfather didn't like the one he was taught, which was making brushes," she began. "It's really a sad story because he was young, in his teens. The last time he visited his home for a weekend, his mother walked with him as far as she could. He said later that he kept turning around, looking back at her because he felt it might be the last time he would ever see her and sure enough it was."

The fourteen-year-old lad apparently hid out as a stowaway on a boat heading for Canada. Upon arrival in Ottawa, Cincinnati said he obtained employment working in a quarry. Joseph's wandering spirit eventually took him to New York where he enlisted in the U.S. Army. Although he was too young to serve, the persistent youth was accepted when he persuaded them he was older than he was. He was sent to fight throughout South Georgia and North Florida in the ferocious Second Seminole Indian War. Joseph fought in Columbia, Baker, Alachua and Pinellas counties before his term was up. Two days after he was honorably discharged, his Army unit was almost completely destroyed

in the dreadful Indian Massacre at Bushnell. For his tour of duty he received a land grant.

Joseph married Sarah Taylor on January 18, 1846 and settled in the Hopeful Community, south of Lake City. The couple had seven sons and one daughter.

"My father, Thomas, was their son," said Cincinnati. "He married his childhood sweetheart, Ellen (Ella) Douglas. They had two children, Bessie and Reid. Ellen died about three months after Reid was born. While his in-laws cared for his young son, Thomas continued to work and care for his other child. Then, before he married my mother, he married Singer Brown's sister, Lulu. The town of Lulu is named after her.

Their children were Wealthy, Eva, Josephine, Earnest [who died as an infant] and Freeman. Lulu died in childbirth two years after Freeman was born. After that, my father married my mother, Georgia," she said.

For a while the couple lived in Columbia County, then later moved to nearby Union County, where Thomas farmed and raised cattle and sheep on 360 acres of land. His health began to decline, so they sold the farm and moved to Macclenny with their family.

When dark-complected, dark-eyed Thomas Dicks and his red-haired, blue-eyed wife, Georgia Satilla, moved their family to Baker County on December 29, 1929, a rickety, narrow wooden bridge separated Macclenny from Glen St. Mary. The couple purchased a frame house and five acres of land on west Highway 90 from Mr. Rufus Louder and that's where Cincinnati lived until she married Charlton. He worked at a sawmill on the opposite side of the highway, and only a little distance from her home.

"My daddy wasn't much of a farmer, but he always had something growing," she said. "He was a crippled man, he cut his foot nearly off cutting wood when he was real young, and he could never plow or anything like that. They had mules and plows back then, so he always had someone on the place to do the farming for him. He tended to his livestock. He loved his sheep and he had goats, too. He was a kind, good man and known throughout for his wit and humor."

When Thomas Dicks died at the age of seventy-four, he was buried at Douglas Cemetery near Lulu next to his first wife, Ella



- 1 Carolyn Mobley Tyndall, Cincinnati, Cherill Mobley, Patrick Mobley, Charlton Mobley**
- 2 Georgia and Thomas Dicks**
- 3 Georgia and Thomas Dicks (ca 1938)**
- 4 Georgia Johns Dicks holding Boston, standing, son Denver. ON FARM CA1928**
- 5 Standing: Denver, Alabama, Spain and Cincinnati
Seated: Boston, Georgia and Thomas**
- 6 Sarah Taylor Dicks (July 3, 1822-October 29, 1896)
Joseph Dicks (January 22, 1819-December 20, 1899)**
- 7 Dr. Reid E. Dicks - Graduated from School of Medicine 1916
with Dr. Edward W. Crockett of Macclenny**

Douglas. Georgia lived to be ninety-one years old and is buried at Macedonia Cemetery in north Macclenny.

Cinnati said her parents were strict, but loving. "Mama was a little high-tempered and would jerk a knot in you right quick if you needed it," she said. "She was real pretty, right up to the day she died, and was always fixed up. She wore a corset, the kind that laced up, and she always looked nice."

Thomas and Georgia bought a Model-T car and, since Thomas didn't care to drive and Georgia didn't know how, their spritely twelve-year-old daughter, Cinnati, often chauffeured the family.

"Well, in 1926 there was no age limit or driving license required," she said.

Cinnati walked from her home in West Macclenny to attend school in the two-story frame school-house on unpaved south Sixth Street ("Nowadays, they ride a bus," she said). She carried her lunch pail filled with bacon or sausage, biscuit and sweet potatoes, since it was before the advent of school cafeterias.

"It was good eating. We didn't have light bread back then, but now days they think they've got to have a sandwich," she quipped.

"That school house was a good strong building but somebody thought it was too old, so they tore it down," she said.

Cinnati played basketball on her school's team. Her coach, Ms. Bernice McRae, thought she was a standout player.

She remembers that the homes of Macclenny citizens in those early years were mostly frame construction, and were usually graced by a porch with rockers and a swing. Most families had a few chickens, some a cow, and maybe even a hog. And almost always a garden.

"The Rowe family had three children, Jack, Kathleen and Marguerite. I can still vividly remember passing by their house on my way to school, and the girls would always be sweeping the porch or shaking the rugs because their mother always had them clean up the house before they left to go to school," she said.

She graduated in 1933 in a class of 17. They were: W.M. Barber, Lacy Barton, Minnie Lee Brown (Futch), Emily Cone (Kirkland), Wilma Cook (Morris), Dolores Hiers (Gainey), J.W. Hiers, Earle Knabb, Durwood

Lott, Leslie Lyons, Bascom Milton, Arlie Rhoden, Edith Rowe (Brandt), Vernon Tutt (Brinson), Eunice Walters and Lois Watson (Cheny).

"I met Charlton when I was about 15," she said, "and we had dated some before I graduated. I still remember the first time I ever met him. Me and another girl were walking up town and was about where Lowder's Corner Store was located when we saw a boy named Lee Clark. He wanted to go with my friend, so he said, 'I got a friend, y'all wait here and let me go get him'; so he ran back up to the sawmill where Charlton was working and said, 'I got two good-looking girls down here, come go with me and let's talk to 'em'. Charlton did and I liked him the first time I ever saw him, I really did, but we didn't do no courting or anything.

"Once in a while I'd see him and talk with him. I always liked him, and cared for him. But finally we got to going together and when it came time to buy my baccalaureate dress, Charlton loaned me his car to go to Jacksonville. And, of course, you had to have a hat in those days, too. Charlton was crazy to let me borrow the car. I knew how to drive, but I'd never been to Jacksonville before. I took some friends with me and we didn't know where any stores were or where to go to shop. When we got there we stopped at the first store we saw; I don't remember the name of it. We all bought us an outfit and came back home. Charlton had more confidence in us than I had."

That Charlton Mobley was her first and only love is obvious.

"Charlton was a good man. He was the hardest worker I've ever seen," she said with pride. "He wanted an education so bad, and he'd walk all the way from Steel Bridge Road north of town to attend school in Macclenny when he was a boy. And it was awful bad when it rained, but he'd do it anyway. He just got wet, but he was determined to go. It's sad to think of just how bad he really wanted to go to school and make something out of himself. But Lee, his older brother didn't want to go to school; he wanted to work on the farm, and Charlton's daddy really knew how to work those boys. It was unpleasant for Charlton when he would go off to school and be blamed later for not doing his share of the work. Charlton finally quit school and went to work on the farm.

"His father, Walton Mobley, was a county commissioner and often got the boys work building roads. They didn't have modern equip-

ment, such as graders to work with like they do now. When Charlton would draw a check for his work, he handed it right over to his daddy.

"When he was 23 years old he decided to leave home. He said to his daddy, 'have you cashed my last check ?,' and his daddy told him he hadn't. So Charlton told him he wanted it. It was \$47.50, and that's what he left home with."

Charlton headed down the road with his suitcase, walking towards Macclenny. Mr. L.N. Lewis stopped and offered him a ride. Charlton informed him he was going to Jacksonville to look for work. Mr. Lewis encouraged Charlton to stay in Baker County and work for him in the sawmill business. Charlton told him he didn't have a place to stay, but the persistent Mr. Lewis told him not to worry, 'I'll get you a place to stay', he said. "And he did," said Cincinnati, "with Mr. and Mrs. Oglesbee, the nicest people in the world to room and board with."

"Charlton went to work for Lewis and stayed until the sawmill closed down four years later."

Charlton was sitting on a bench down at Louder's store when Thaddous Pickett stopped and offered him a job. Charlton explained that the mill was shut down and he was waiting for it to open.

"Well, come work for me until it does," said Pickett.

Actually, Pickett worked for the sawmill, owned and operated by two brothers, John and Augusta Walters. John ran the sawmill, Augusta was a preacher and supervised the woods (field) operation.

So Charlton went to work for him and that's where he was working when Cincinnati first met him.

"We just mostly would see each other and talk, wasn't courting or anything. We finally got to dating a little bit before graduation," she said. "We'd usually park and sit in his car in front of Mae Power's house across from Powers Drug Store on Main Street. We didn't go nowhere else, we didn't know where to go. We just watched people walking the streets because there was always a lot of people in town, shopping and doing business those days. They would stop and talk to us and we'd exchange news. It was really a lot of fun, especially on Saturday night. If I couldn't go uptown on Saturday night I was disappointed. In those days, there were lots of hogs and cows roaming around, too; they'd just go right up to the stores. All the streets were unpaved

except for Main Street and there was one red light at Main and Fifth Streets. The stores stayed open very late for people to shop, back then. You could get a hair cut if you wanted it at midnight because Lautice Dugger's barber shop stayed open until eleven or twelve o'clock at night.

"I never did date anyone else but Charlton. Well, there was this other fellow, but he wasn't from around here, and there's a story about how that happened," she said.

"After we started going together awhile we discussed getting married," she said. "Charlton even bought a city lot and planned to build us a house on it. When Charlton first asked me to marry him, I asked him where we would live. He said we could live in one of the mill houses, but I told him, 'no, I don't want to live there'. Then he said, 'Well, we could live with my Ma and Pa'. I told him I didn't want to do that either. Then he said, 'Well, I could buy that lot on U.S. 90 from Lautice Dugger and get my brother Lee and cousin Jessie to build us a home'. I told him, 'Oh well, I would like that. The answer is yes. Yes, I'll marry you.'

"But then there came a pretty young widow to town and he went out with her and when I found it out I wouldn't go out with him for about two years and I used some bad language on him, too. I got my brother to go with me because I knew he had gone to see this girl. I went up to the house where she was staying and a man came out and I said, 'is Charlton here?', and he said, 'yes', and I said, 'Well, I want to see him'. Well, Charlton came out and said, 'What did you come down here for?', and I said, 'I came to see you, and I want to know what you are doing down here; you got no business down here and I want you to go to hell where you started!' Then I turned and left. I didn't go with him for two years. He tried a lot of times, but I wouldn't do it. I'd be walking home from Sunday School and church on Sunday and he always waylaid me, and I'd go walking on. He'd try and get me to ride, but I wouldn't do it. Sometimes, I'd stop and talk to him a few minutes, but then I'd say I had to go and he'd try and get me to get in, but I wouldn't do it."

Cincinnati moved to Dundee to live with her sister, Eva, and her husband, Amon Powell. She quickly found work in the local canning plant, Florida Gold.

"That's when I met this other feller, named Paul Morgan. I liked him pretty good, and so did my sister and her family. I'd go to a picture show with him and he'd come and go to Sunday School and church with us on Sunday. But I couldn't forget Charlton."

Charlton continually tried to contact her, but she would not respond.

"Well, he'd already bought this lot and was planning to build us a house on it, so you can see how I was mad and hurt. He'd write me and if Mrs. Thelma Hayes was living she could tell you about the telegrams he'd send, and you know, it did bother me when I'd get one, and I couldn't help but cry; but I'd say 'I'm not going to hear his static', and I'd just stiffen my heart and say, 'if he'll do me that way one time, he'll probably do me that way again'."

Occasionally she would return to Baker County to visit her parents, but she would never let Charlton know she was home.

"I'd see him pass by from my parents house, but I never let him see me."

Then Paul Morgan proposed marriage.

"He thought there may be someone back home and he'd always say, 'don't story to me', but I did."

Charlton's letters continued. "Come back and marry me," he would write, over and over.

Finally, Cincinnati informed Charlton she was coming home for a visit and informed him of the time her train would arrive in Jacksonville.

"Paul took me to the train in Dundee and carried my luggage aboard. He was so good to me," she said. "I hope he's done good in life, I haven't seen him in years because I never went back."

Charlton was promptly at the train terminal when she arrived in Jacksonville.

"He liked to have fainted," she said. "He hadn't seen me in two years, and I'd bought myself some nice clothes and make-up. He would take deep breaths two or three times."

They talked, but that's all, she said. Cincinnati informed him she would be travelling by bus to Macclenny and not in his car with him.

"I told him I had a lot of thinking to do and I wasn't promising him anything," she said. Charlton was shocked.

After three months at home, she agreed to see him again and talk.

"I finally made up with him and it was wonderful from then on," she said. "I know I made the right decision, I can honestly tell you that. I hadn't forgotten him, I couldn't. It's hard to forget someone you really care for. He started building on the house right away."

Charlton was still working for the sawmill. He was encouraged by his employer, Mr. John Walters, to select the best cypress logs the company had and then see that they were made into the lumber of his specifications. He hired long-time Macclenny contractors -- his brother, Lee, and cousin, Jesse Mobley -- to build the five- room home with a porch all the way across the rear and a partial porch on the front, paying cash as it was constructed.

Charlton was boarding at the time with Mrs. L.A. Barnes. When it came time to get married, the new house still had to be furnished, so he obtained permission from the Barnes' for Cincinnati to move in with him until they could obtain furniture.

On April 3, 1935, Cincinnati and Charlton went to Judge Frank Dowling's house to pick up their marriage license, and then on around to the home of his employer and her pastor, the Reverend Augusta Walter's house, to be married. Lautice Dugger, Charlton's long-time friend, accompanied the couple and stood as a witness. The pastor's wife stood with Cincinnati.

"I didn't even tell my mama and daddy," she said. "I didn't even talk it over with them. I told Spain that night what I was fixin' to do, and when Charlton came to pick me up, I just set my suitcase in the window, went out the back door, and picked it up as I went by. Mama and daddy were playing solitaire in the front room. They never knew I was even gone. Spain told them the next morning at breakfast. They loved Charlton so they were tickled to death."

The young couple spent their first night in Charlton's room at the Barnes home, and both went to work early the following morning.

"I got off work on Thursday afternoons while I was working for Bob Knabb at his mercantile store, and usually Charlton had Saturdays

off, so when he got off on Saturday, he drove to Jacksonville by himself to get our kitchen supplies," she said. "He got a real good sales lady and he told her he'd just got married and he wanted to buy everything for the kitchen, and honey, she fixed him up with everything, long spoons, long fork, and so forth. He had a car load of stuff when he got home. Then Mr. William Lion Matthews, a merchant -- who was father of Willie Mae Gilbert, who with her husband had a trading post in the city -- told Charlton he'd take us to Jacksonville and let us pick out the furniture we wanted and buy it wholesale. He said he'd add ten percent to it for his cost. So I went with him on Thursday and he carried me to Swindall Powell." she said.

"You know, some people think Charlton was stingy, but I know better -- he wasn't. He paid for our house as he went. Now, it wasn't wired or with plumbing, but it was built solid and paid for. And when he bought our furniture, he paid cash. Charlton believed in saving up for what you wanted and paying cash. I picked out a living room suite, two bedroom suites, and a kitchen cabinet that was a dandy, you could pull out the leaf for a work place and it even had a place to store your flour. Oh, it was so nice and I was so proud of all of it. I didn't have a stove, but Mr. Matthews offered me a nice kerosene stove for six dollars. It didn't have an oven, but it had five burners. My kitchen was narrow and it fit right in. It didn't look too good, but I got me a board and covered it with oil cloth and made me an apron to go all the way around it. I tacked it on and I could pull it off when I went to use the stove and put it on when I finished. It looked real nice in the kitchen." she said.

"You see how wide those base boards are?" she said, pointing to twelve-inch boards that lined the base of her floor. "Well, that's all cypress, and now days some houses don't even have base boards.

"Me and Charlton were always a team, we worked together. Charlton was a good husband, good father, and a good business man. To let you know just how good a good businessman he was, well, if you knew all his holdings at one time, you'd agree, especially when he started off with \$47.50. At one time he owned 4,000 acres of land, but he sold some and gave some to the children. Charlton was good to his children, they didn't dread their daddy.

“Charlton was such a good worker that one day his boss said if he had ten men like Charlton he’d run the rest of ‘em off,” she smiled. “Charlton always tried to work too much and too hard, and one day some of those guys he worked with asked him, ‘why do you work so hard, you are going to cause us to lose our job because we have to work harder,’ and Charlton said, ‘you all are working to keep your job, I’m working to do better’.”

At the sawmill, Charlton worked the log ramp, hauled logs, and was trusted to mark all logs that came off the truck so the men could get their honest pay wages. Often he came in late at night, waiting on the last log truck to come in, even if they were very late.

“He considered it was his obligation,” said his wife. “And he wanted to make sure he did his job good.”

“I was pregnant with our first child when we got electricity and were able to wire for lights in our house.” she said.

“Frank Wells, who was City Manager, sent for me one day to go to the community center, and he signed me up for a little bit of money. I never did find out what it was for, but I used that money to have my house wired for electricity.” she said. “We still didn’t have plumbing and we continued to use an outdoor toilet with a dirt floor, and that was terrible, having to get up and go out there at night.” she said. “Later, the government had everyone build nicer ones to their specifications with a wood floor.

As the tidings of their first-born became a reality, Charlton expressed concern.

“Charlton was as scared to death of childbirth as he was of a cocked gun.” she said. “He had a brother that lost a wife when her twins were three weeks old, we thought from neglect, not proper care, so Charlton really wanted me to have good care.

“Charlton would take me in to Jacksonville in the turpentine truck to see the doctor. He’d put me out wherever it was most convenient because it was hard getting that big old truck into town. He would go on to the docks or wherever he was going and if it wasn’t too far, I’d walk on or I’d get a cab on to the office that was in the Cohen building. You know, we just didn’t have a lot of money and you could walk if you didn’t have the money. Young people don’t know what hard times are. We managed to pay as we went along.”

As the birth drew nearer, Charlton insisted that she go into Jacksonville to be closer to St. Luke's Hospital when the time arrived for delivery.

"We had former neighbors who lived near St. Luke's, and they invited me to stay with them until time for my delivery," said Cincinnati. "I didn't want to go, but Charlton insisted; he was so scared. So I went and stayed two or three days and oh, I couldn't stand it -- I was just so homesick. So when I went in to see my doctor I asked if he could tell me how much longer and explained to him about my being in Jacksonville with my friend. He said he would have to put me on the table for an exam. I told him I wouldn't mind this time, that I'd crawl under the table if it would do any good and I could just go home. So he put me on the table and examined me and said, 'you won't have this baby for at least a week', so I told him I was going home. He walked out in the office with me and said, 'Mrs. Mobley, you're not going to have this baby for another week or more, so you might as well go on home'. He really helped me to keep from hurting my friend's feelings. So I got on the bus and went home.

"Now you talk about somebody being happy. When Charlton drove up and he saw me walk out on that porch, he was the happiest thing in the world. He said, 'I've been so miserable, I couldn't hardly stand it, but I wanted you to be close so nothing would happen to you'."

Three weeks later Cincinnati went into labor. Charlton called Seashore Ambulance Service in Jacksonville to transport her to St. Luke's Hospital for the birth of their first child. The date was January 20, 1941 and they named their son Wayne Cherill.

"Charlton had a telephone put in our house so we'd have it to call an ambulance when the time came. At that time Macclenny had a small telephone company owned by Mrs. Mattie Jean Thompson, who was also the operator. In those days you would just ring her up, you didn't have numbers to dial. Sometimes you could ring her up and get her and sometimes you couldn't. Poor old thing was trying to raise her grandchildren and she'd be busy cooking or something. She had a hard time.

"Dr. Neal Alford charged \$50 for delivering Cherill. I stayed in the hospital for two weeks after he was born. Back then, they didn't

want you to come home early like they do now. And, even if you had your baby at home, you stayed in bed back then. Charlton would have let me stay a month, to be safe, if he could have." she said.

When their daughter, Carolyn Rivers Mobley, was born in 1942 Charlton once again gave Cincinnati the royal treatment.

"He called the ambulance again." she said. "A very good friend, Minnie Crews, rode with me and Charlton drove the truck. Minnie stayed with me through the night, but the next morning Charlton took her to the bus station to catch a bus home so she could get her children off to school. Carolyn was born at 1:30 that afternoon by Dr. W.R. Schnauss."

Times were hard for the couple. In the beginning, Cincinnati washed her clothes in a lard can out in the back yard.

"I'd boil them in the can and it wouldn't hold very much. When you would get them to boiling, the water would boil over and put the fire out. Then, if the train came by, cinders would fall on them. We'd always try and wait until the train passed before hanging out clean clothes to dry. A passenger train came through going west every morning and one would pass through going east in the afternoon.

"One day, Charlton was passing by Gilbert's Trading Post and saw them unloading some wash pots. He came home and told me to run up there and get us the largest iron wash pot they had.

"We put our name on the list with Mr. Corbett Yarbrough to buy an electric cook stove and a refrigerator. It was about two years later when I got my washing machine. And I was so proud of it. It had nice big rollers, not like mama's little ones. If you put a pair of dungarees in mama's, it would flip up and you'd have to tighten it back down. Mine had them big rollers, and man, it would really wring them clothes out dry and a pair of dungarees would go through without any trouble.

"I took in washing to pay for my washing machine. We had to put it on the back porch. My three rinse tubs were in the yard. I pumped water from a pitcher pump to fill them and then had to take the clothes up and down the steps to rinse them."

Meanwhile, Charlton expanded into the turpentine business. After the sawmill, where he was employed, moved to Nassau County, Charlton worked for Southern Resin and Chemical Company at Pine Top, west of Glen St. Mary, for the next nine and a half years.

The thrifty Charlton had an opportunity to buy two trucks and remaining year's contract for hauling pine gum from Mr. Bridges.

"We had a truck, and a semi trailer," said Cincinnati. "Charlton went from camp to camp, loading pine gum to take to the company to convert into resin and other materials. Then he'd take it to the loading docks in Jacksonville," she said.

With two toddlers underfoot, Cincinnati was holding down the homefront, and working with her ambitious husband as well.

"After Carolyn was born, I'd put her bassinet in the turpentine truck, take Cherill and go help Charlton wherever he needed me," she said.

"Well, before I'd leave everyday, I'd have to get up early and milk our cow, feed our chickens, tend to the garden and sometimes it would take me an hour just to cut the okra. I'd get my babies bathed and dressed and cook dinner. The children and I would eat, then I'd make Charlton's lunch. Sometimes I'd drive all the way to Slocom, Blackjack, Fairview, Chiefland or Williston, just wherever the camps had a load of gum ready."

As a favor, before leaving the city, Charlton would usually pick up grocery orders to deliver to the people who lived in the turpentine camps. That courtesy was beyond the call of duty, but being the good man he was, he did it.

Most turpentine camps were located deep in the woods reachable by a two-lane path called a log road, usually impassable if it rained.

"When I'd get near to some place like Slocom, I would stop and wait on Charlton to bring the barrels out to me," said Cincinnati. "I could time it almost perfectly because I'd hear Charlton coming in his truck loaded with about 18 barrels just minutes after I would arrive. Sometimes he'd have someone to help him unload onto my truck or sometimes I'd help him. Then he'd go back to the camp for 18 more barrels. I'd usually leave with 36 barrels and me and the children would drive on into Jacksonville to the docks and unload.

"As we made money, Charlton would buy land with it every time he had a chance. Some had pine trees already planted, and when it didn't he'd plant pines on it. We both worked, he didn't do it by himself, but he had the plan and I helped him with it. We were a team.

"After my mama got an electric refrigerator, I borrowed her old ice box. I thought it was real nice and I was proud of it. We put it out on our back porch and every night I'd put a dime on the top of it and the next morning the iceman would leave me a ten-cent block of ice. I couldn't nurse my babies, so I had to have someway to keep their baby bottles cool."

For several years, Charlton had been asking Cincinnati to consider having another baby. When her sister, Alabama, who had married Charlton's brother, Luther, gave birth to a son, Thomas, in 1952, Charlton fell in love with her baby and approached Cincinnati again.

"Well," she said, "I won't give you just one, but I will have two. Otherwise one would seem like an only child since Cherill and Carolyn are so much older," she told her doting husband.

Cincinnati turned 40 years old on February 3, 1954 and on February 11 gave birth to their third child, Michael Dicks Mobley. She said she was the talk of the town. Two years later, on October 14, 1956, another son, Patrick Michael, weighed in at 12 pounds. This time Cincinnati, at age 42, was the rage of the town.

By this time the couple had a car and Cincinnati drove into Jacksonville for her doctor appointments.

The little family grew in size and other responsibilities entered into their schedule. Besides school, there was Sunday School, too -- something Cincinnati believed to be most important.

"I always went to church and took the children," she said. "I've been a Baptist all my life and Charlton was sprinkled when he was small and his folks attended the Methodist Church at Macedonia. While we were dating, he'd go with me sometimes, but after we got married and had our children, Charlton was under conviction a long time but just wouldn't surrender.

"Well, sometimes Charlton would decide to go to church and he would say, 'let's go to so and so church tonight', so we'd visit several churches, but eventually he got to going more and more to my church. Then they started building on Faith Baptist Church where my mother was a charter member and Charlton helped them build it. I thought surely Charlton would join that church. Carolyn offered to join with him at Faith Baptist where her grandma went and I told him I'd change, too,

because I thought we should all go to the same church. But Charlton wouldn't hear of it, and one Sunday he had gone out to his daddy's house while we all went to church. We were surprised to see Charlton walk in and sit down with us. He was late, but when they sang the song of invitation, he was the first one up there.

"I remember that day so well because our former neighbors had some harsh words with Charlton concerning our chickens. We really didn't have that many but it was just enough to aggravate somebody and if one got out, well, it naturally went where it wasn't supposed to. When they moved, a friend said to Charlton, 'I heard you run your neighbors off'. Charlton told him he didn't mean to and didn't know it if he had.

"Charlton told this person that he had even tried to keep his men from making noise with the trucks when they'd drive up to the house, to avoid disturbing his neighbors. He told him he had talked to his men repeatedly about being quiet." said Cincinnati.

"But I knew the neighbors were upset over Charlton's chickens. I never liked chickens that much and I couldn't blame our neighbors. The chickens would get out of the pen and mess with her flowers and she'd sic her dogs onto the chickens and that's what it was about," she said.

"Well, the night he accepted the invitation to join the church, our former neighbors were sitting right up ahead of me. I saw them whispering, I don't know what they were saying, but when it came time for the members to go up to speak with Charlton, they went up to speak to him. Charlton apologized to them, the good Lord, and everybody else, and I was so happy he did because we had been friends a long time. I was glad we were all friends again."

The Mobley's never indulged their children, but saw that they had the necessities of life.

"We didn't spoil our children. Charlton didn't do the discipline, I was the one who done the whipping if they needed it, but I had easy children to manage. I started off in the beginning and we had little trouble with them even as teenagers. We brought them up in Sunday School and church. They had good teachers and friends. We talked to them a lot."

The Mobley family was without television long after most of their friends and family had bought a set. In 1972 when the Mobley's son, Mike, was 18 years old, he began to ask his daddy to buy a television.

"He would go over to his girl friend's to watch television and come home and say, 'Daddy, I wish you'd buy us a television and we'd be like they are in All In The Family. You could be Archie, mama can be Edith and Carolyn can be Gloria and I'll be Meathead'. Well, Charlton surprised us and went out and bought one. That was in November."

A few weeks later, on December 13, the family suffered the greatest tragedy of their lives when their son, Mike, was accidentally killed.

"Mike loved it [the TV] and enjoyed it those few days before his death," she said.

When Michael died, the family issued the following statement: "Our hearts are broken to have lost Mike, but we are grateful to God for each day that we did have him." Cincinnati says their faith sustained them in their anguish.

Cincinnati's close friend was Mrs. Leona (TJ.) Knabb. She often invited her to Eastern Star meetings. The local chapter was named in her honor.

"She and Mrs. Nettie Dorman kind of took me under their wings and I served as Worthy Matron for the local chapter three times."

She has also served for two years as Macclenny Woman's Club president.

In 1959 Cincinnati and Charlton hired their first baby sitter.

"And I think it was the last, too," she said, laughing. The occasion was the first Miss Baker County beauty pageant ever to be affiliated with the Miss America Pageant. Their daughter, Carolyn, was one of the 33 contestants. The couple was elated when their beautiful and talented daughter, a high school majorette, won the title.

Cherill and Carolyn, who had graduated from Macclenny-Glen High School together in 1959, enrolled in Young Harris College in north Georgia. After their first year, Carolyn transferred to the University of Florida and Cherill joined the Marines and went off to Parris Island. The family was proud when Cherill was awarded the Navy Commendation

Medal for bravery in rescuing several wounded Marines from an exploded land-mine field. Cherill was also awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received in the incident.

"Carolyn was easy to get homesick," said Cincinnati. "I think the people thought I was enrolled over at the University I went over there so much."

Carolyn studied to be a chemist and after graduation accepted a job in Cape Canaveral, now Cape Kennedy. That's where she met Roger Tyndall. The couple married on February 15, 1969 in Macclenny.

"I'm real proud of my children. Patrick is a real hard worker, like his daddy. He is an engineer with CSX. Cherill is very attentive and comes over every morning to make sure I am up and dressed and okay. Carolyn lives in Amelia Island Plantation and comes home regularly and calls very often," she said.

Cherill married Kathy Padgett on May 6, 1992. They have a daughter, Jackie, and Cherill has Julie Ann and Richard Mobley from a previous marriage.

Patrick married Dicey Crawford September 14, 1988. They have one son, Jeremy.

Carolyn, a former Green Bay Packer Golden Girl cheerleader in Green Bay, Wisconsin, travelled with her mother in the summer of 1968 to Cairo, Egypt, where they rode camels near the pyramids and the Sphinx. Their trip to the Middle East included a tour of Israel and a special boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.

Carolyn and her husband, Roger, launched a contest news letter that was so successful it was later purchased by McCall Magazine. Cincinnati helped out in its infancy. The first mailing was sent to 20,000 persons and when the subscriptions began pouring in they were all overwhelmed. The success of their ingenious enterprise has afforded the couple a life of world travel and other interesting ventures.

Cincinnati lost her beloved Charlton on August 29, 1992. The couple celebrated their golden anniversary in 1985. They never fell out of love and together they spent 57 rich and fruitful years.

Life without Charlton was almost unbearable. She admits to countless lonely days and nights. The children encouraged her to keep active. Following Charlton's death, she and Cherill took an absorbing

and inspiring tour to see the stunning sites of the west. She added a garage to her home, gleaming white siding, and screened the front porch. In the future, she plans to do other improvements, such as new wiring and modernizing the kitchen. But one thing that will never be changed or obliterated in the home Charlton built for her 60 years ago, is the memories.

In 1993 Cincinnati's children honored her with an 80th birthday party. They invited the entire county, and most of them came. Her talented and enterprising daughter, Carolyn, planned the menu and prepared most of the food single-handedly for the enormous crowd. Before the event, the children asked their mother what had been the most important things in her life, and Cincinnati answered by saying, 'Three things: accepting the Lord, getting married, and having four children'. The fascinating program, charted by her children, centered around a mesmerizing video-taped vignette of her life directly focused on those three things. As a larger-than-life photo of Charlton flashed on the screen that day, a tear fell from Cincinnati's eye onto her cheek, and in spite of the huge crowd of onlookers, a smile of courage and steadfastness emerged. She's a woman composed of unwavering convictions, and an unchanging character that is uniquely woven into an abundance of rare stamina and fortitude.

Historical Sketch of Dicks Family

The following sketch was researched by members of the Dicks family -- Archie Dicks in England, Denver and Trammel Dicks, Lake City, Florida and drawn from primary source documents in the possession of the Drew Dicks family.

I am especially indebted to Denver Dicks and his wife Laverne of Lake City, for the time and effort they gave to supply me with copies of the family photographs and records used in this account of the DICKS FAMILY HISTORY.

On July 14, 1784, Joseph Dicks of the parish of Bishopstrow and Eleanor Fry of the parish of Heytesbury, were married at Heytesbury Parish Church in their native country of England. The couple had eight known children: William, 1785; Mary Ann, 1787; Charlotte, 1789; Jacob, 1791; Eleanor, 1793; Isac, 1795; Sarah, 1798, and Joseph, 1808, who died in infancy.

Joseph and Eleanor's son, William, married Jane, whose last name is not known, in the parish of Heytesbury, in 1802. Their first son, Joseph, was born in 1802 and died in 1805. Maria was their next known child, born 1816, then Kezia in 1818, and another son named Josephin 1819 and Sophia in 1820.

During the period between the first and second child, William, who was in the army, participated in the Battle of Waterloo, where he was wounded. He never fully recovered from the injury and died July 30, 1820, at the age of thirty-five.

The couple's son, Joseph, was born in England on January 22, 1819. It was the custom in that time for young boys to become an apprentice and study assigned trades. Young Joseph was given the task of learning to make brushes. It was required that the youth live a number of miles from his residence to be near the brush training center or factory. On one particular weekend after he had visited his family, his mother accompanied him part of the way on his return trip to the brush factory. Bidding farewell to her son, she turned toward home and later, Joseph was to describe how he watched her fade from his sight, knowing that they may never meet again.

Soon after, he boarded a ship in Heytesbury, England, that was bound for America. The long and perilous journey took him across the Atlantic to where his ship docked on the Canadian shore. Joseph is said to have worked for a while in a quarry in or near Ottawa, later making his way to New York. He joined the U.S. Army on September 24, 1838, in Rochester and was assigned to Company "C" 2nd. Regiment. During this time, the Second Seminole Indian War was raging and his assignment was to serve within the Florida and Georgia frontiers where considerable trouble with the Indians was occurring.

By the end of December 1838, he was stationed at Fort Andrews, located on the Fennholloway River about four miles southwest of Hampton Springs and about ten miles from the Gulf in what is now Taylor County. According to his military records, his stay at this fort was a very short one.

By February 1839, Joseph was in Fort Fanning near what is now Fanning Springs, located where U.S. 19 crosses the Suwannee River. The April 1839 records show that he was in Fort District 16, East Florida, where he served for the remainder of 1839. This location is about six miles south of Alligator, now known as Lake City.

Beginning in April 1840 he was stationed at Fort Number 15, East Florida, in what is now Union County and in the vicinity of Providence. In June 1840, he was listed as being at Bee Tree Branch, which is near Hawthorne. By August of 1840, he was at Fort King near Ocala, where he was stationed for a full year.

In December of 1841 he was moved to Fort Moniac, East Florida, located on the Saint Mary River near the Florida-Georgia line at a point called Hogans Ferry in Baker County. His last place of service in Florida was at Fort Shannon in April 1842 near Palatka on the St. Johns River. From Palatka he was transferred to Buffalo Barracks, New York, where he finished his five-year term of Army service on September 24, 1843.

Joseph's personal data on his military records show his height to be 5 feet, 4 inches tall, age 22, hazel eyes, brown hair and dark complexion. His birthplace is listed as Wiltshire, England, occupation farmer.

Joseph and his first wife, Sarah Taylor, were married in Ocala on January 18, 1846 according to records on file in that county's clerk of

courts office. Family history accounts say the couple met in south Georgia. The 1850 Federal census records reveal the couple was living in Thomasville, Georgia. In 1859 Joseph received a land grant issued by the U.S. Government at Newmansville, near Alachua. It was signed by President James Buchanan on April 1, 1859 and involved more than 200 acres. During his life, Joseph Dicks operated a farm, owned a country store and ran an enterprising sawmill business. The land later became a part of the farm belonging to the couple's son, Henry Dicks.

The 1860 census records disclose he and his family were living in Columbia County within the Hopeful Community.

It is believed that Joseph purchased the 'Squatter' improvements of Johnny Markham. A short time later he took his entitled Land Grant, earned by military service, located near the Markham Improvements. Exact descriptions indicate the granted lands are the N1/2 of the NW1/4 of Section 1, T 5S, R 27E and the S1/2 of the SW1/4 of Section 36, T 4S, R 27E. One hundred sixty acres were involved and in 1984 was owned by R.P. Dicks, Rodney Dicks, and Robert Cox.

Joseph corresponded with his family after his arrival in America and while living in Columbia County, Alligator East Florida. When his mother, Jane, died in England in 1864, Joseph received a letter from his sister, Sophia. It was sent from Heytesbury, England, and addressed to Joseph Dicks, Alligator, East Florida and the complete text is as follows:

Heytesbury, England

Dear Brother:

Tis now a long time since we have heard from each other and God only knows if these few lines will find you in the land of the living but I do sincerely hope that one of your family is still alive to send us back word something about you. It was, I know, useless to write during the war and as Florida was one of the states against the Government, letters would not be sent to you, but as now peace is proclaimed and the postal route open I do hope we shall correspond again. In the first place, I must say that our poor mother has been dead two years. She was very helpless and childless for years and we had a great deal of trouble, but I done all that could be done to make her comfortable and she was quite resigned to death. I am thankful to say that I, and my hus-

band, is both pretty well as we can expect. My son, Joseph Dicks Haines is at work in London and doing well. Maria has been married four years and has two children. Her husband (whose parents live next door to us) is a city missionary in London. They visited in summer and father and I have been to London since. My next, Sarah, is in service in London and our youngest Henry is just six years old. My sister Maria and husband is quite well. Their family is growing up fine young women. We had one living with us apprenticed to a dressmaker here. My sister, Kezia and husband and two children is well and living at Knook. Their son is a carpenter, their daughter a dressmaker. I shall say but little about your old friends. Aunt Betty Courtry is dead and many more of our relations of whom I will try and say more in a future letter. I hope this will find you and your wife still alive and well and also your children. I hope you will get this letter that you will lose no time to write back and tell us all the particulars, how you fared during the war, if you lost your property and if any of your children, that is the boys, (?) themselves as soldiers. We shall wait with anxiety to hear for I can assure you we have been very uneasy and in great trouble about you. You will give our kind love to your wife and family. I hope you will soon recover what you have lost. I know things with you is expensive but you have a better chance that we. Times here is bad, very little trade and food is dear all but bread. Men only get nine shillings a week and no chance of getting better. No land as with you to be bought to help a family. You must work for just what they chose to give you as all the farmers is agreed to that but we thank God we have not (busted ?), and have not the trouble for my husband looks at home and to the welfare of his family first. This is one reason that keeps us above many who spend too much of their time in the Alehouse and leave their children destitute. Now I just come to conclusion as I almost fear my letter may never reach you as directed this to Alligator East Florida, but I hope it will find you all right. Your sister's husband and all our family join in kind love and well wishes to you and family, trusting to hear from you as soon as you get this.

We remain your loving brother and sister, James and Sophia Haines.

In later years, Joseph is said to have crossed the ocean once again to pay a visit to his beloved family in England.

Joseph had been born into an Episcopalian Church membership in England. In America, he joined the Methodist Church at Ebenezer. He was remembered by his family as constantly offering the blessing before meals and faithfully reading his Bible daily.

He has been described by those who remember him as "displaying some imperfections of life," but highly regarded as "rigid in honesty in his business dealings". He was very successful in productive agriculture and farm management. He is remembered as a loyal, patriotic American, and as disapproving slavery. He is said to have worked long and hard in all his endeavors.

Sarah was a member of the Old Providence Church and Bethlehem Church before becoming a charter member of Hopeful Church. She faithfully traveled by wagon, horse back and even foot over dusty, unpaved roads to regularly attend the old Providence Baptist Church, which was seven miles from her home. She later had 18 grandchildren who became members of Hopeful Church.

Many family members have endeavored to piece together the Joseph and Sarah (Taylor) Dicks family history. In addition to those named at the beginning of this sketch, the family group sheet of Donna Jean Robartson Alcorn of Fort White, is the most complete. Ms. Robartson listed family records in possession of Margaret Ernesteen Beasley Graham of Union County as her source of information for much of the information. According to Ms. Alcorn, Ms. Graham said some of the Dicks children died of plague. All presently known Dicks family data is presented here in hopes that it will be helpful to future family historians.

JOSEPH, Born: January 22, 1819 in England. Died 20 December 1899 in Columbia County, Florida. Buried Hopefull Baptist Church Cemetery in Columbia, County.

Married SARAH TAYLOR in Marion County Florida January 18, 1846.

SARAH TAYLOR: Born July 3, 1822 in Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia. Died October 29, 1896 Columbia County, Florida. Buried

Hopefull Baptist Church Cemetery.

ISAAC DICKS Born October 19, 1846 in Georgia

WILLIAM PENN DICKS Born September 29, 1847 in Georgia, Died December 8, 1914.

JOHN DICKS Born January 15, 1850 in Georgia

JAMES DICKS Born May 6, 1852 in Columbia County Florida, married Ellen Smith March 9, 1876, Died Nov. 24, 1924.

GEORGE WASHINGTON DICKS (called "Doctor") was born Sept. 5, 1856 in Columbia Co. Fl.

ROBERT DICKS Born Sept. 13, 1857 in Columbia Co., Fl.

SARAH MARGARET DICKS Born May 7, 1859 in Columbia Co. Fl. Married William Jackson Marguss Nov. 15, 1877

HENRY DICKS Born Oct. 23, 1862 in Columbia Co. Fl. and died May 5, 1936.

JOSEPH ZACHARIAH DICKS Born May 29, 1865 in Columbia Co. Fl. Died Nov. 12, 1939

THOMAS DICKS Born Sept. 12, 1868 in Columbia Co., Fl. Married (1) Ellen Douglas, (2) Lula Brown and (3) Georgia Satilla Johns.

CHILDREN BORN OF **JOSEPH DICKS** (1819–1988) AND **POLLY TAYLOR**: Polly was the younger sister of Sarah who lived in the Dicks household, and bore Jessie and Stephen for Joseph.

JESSE DICKS Born October 9, 1852, Died May 2, 1918. Buried in Ebenezer Cemetery, Columbia County, Fl. Elizabeth, 1st wife of Jesse, born Oct. 1, 1857, Died March 20, 1879. Mary A. 2nd. wife of Jesse, Born Aug. 16, 1841, Died April 3, 1893.

STEPHEN SPARKMAN DICKS (later changed his surname to that of his mother, Polly Taylor, and thus was **STEPHEN SPARKMAN TAYLOR**. Jessie and Stephen, with their mother Polly, were listed on U.S. Federal census records as children living in the household of Joseph and Sarah Dicks.

Joseph and Sarah were separated by her death in 1896. Sarah was the first person to be buried in the Hopeful Church Cemetery. Joseph died three years later, in 1899, and is buried beside his wife.

Following the death of Sarah, Joseph married Adaline Carrol from Suwannee County whose maiden name was Brewer. They were united in marriage by the Reverend Scott Ware in the Henry Dicks

home on November 5, 1897. A record of this is on file in the Clerk of Courts Office in Columbia County.

A pension act of 1892 provided benefits for veterans of the Indian War. In early January 1893, Joseph applied for the pension, which was granted. He drew the pension of eight dollars a month until his death. After his death at age 80 in 1899, his widow, Adaline, drew the pension which was increased in 1908 to twelve dollars per month. She died in 1923.

REMEMBRANCES OF DENVER DICKS, SON OF THOMAS AND GEORGIA DICKS, AND HIS WIFE, LAVERNE (JOHNSON) DICKS.

"My father, Thomas Dicks, was the youngest of nine children born in Columbia County to Joseph and Sarah Dicks in 1868. He was an easy going man, known for his wit and humor. He had been widowed twice and left with several children to raise. His in-laws kept the baby while he continued to farm and care for his daughter. He married again to Lula Brown, and the town of Lulu is named for her, and they had five children before her death. He needed someone to be a mother to his children. One day he went visiting at the home of John and Mary Johns of Columbia County with the idea of courting one of their daughters. There appeared to be some confusion as to which daughter he was interested in, so Thomas later wrote a letter stating his interest in their daughter, Georgia. This did not set well with her mother since Georgia had older unmarried sisters. However, they were married when Georgia was 26 years old and Thomas was 44. The services were held on the front porch of Georgia's home. Her mother was angry and did not attend. Instead, she sat on the back porch. Years later, when Georgia was asked why her mother was so angry, she replied, 'If you had a good pack horse, and it ran away, how would you feel?'

"My parents had five children that lived to adulthood. We all took turns working in the fields, rotating staying home and cooking for the family.

"My mother often told the story of when a neighbor, Carl B. "Dinty" Moore, asked her husband, Thomas, which of his three wives he loved the best, he replied, 'It would be a blame fool who loved a dead wife better than a live one'.

"Before daddy married his second wife, Lula Brown, there was an interesting event that happened in her life. She made a trip to Hagan, Florida, to visit her aunt. The townspeople of Hagan were looking for another name for the town, since their mail was continuously getting mixed up with the town of Hague, near Gainesville. Since she was the first person to step off the train they named it after her except someone got the spelling mixed up from Lula to Lulu. Anyway, the town was named in her honor, changed from Hagan to Lulu. Lula was visiting her aunt in Hagan, but she also had an admirer (boyfriend) there, and maybe he had influence in naming the town after her. Lula was reared near the Olustee Monument location. Her brothers were Millard and John Brown (known as Singer)."

Laverne Dicks spent many hours of her time listening to Denver's mother, Georgia, tell stories of the family.

"She told me about one interesting event when her grandfather paid someone to serve in the Civil War for him, and the man got killed. There are records showing where her grandfather deeded the man's family 500 acres of land and a small amount of money."

Laverne related another story that has left a lasting impression on some Dicks family members.

"Denver's father, Thomas, couldn't hear very well. When Denver and Boston were young boys they were out in the chicken yard one day, and Boston saw a rooster sitting in the hen nest. He came running to the house telling his mama, 'that ole rooster is out there in that hen house sittin' on the hen's nest and laid an egg in it'. Mr. Dicks was sitting across the room saying, 'what, what, what did he say, Georgia, what did he say?'

She went over to him and yelled, 'Mr. Dicks, he said the rooster laid an egg'. So now, when someone is saying something that is really insignificant, and says, 'What did you say?', we just say, 'the rooster laid an egg,' meaning, it's not important. Georgia always called her husband, Mr. Dicks, instead of Thomas, or Tom," she said.

Denver said that when his father was just a small boy, he and two of his brothers had gone into the mule lot to play one day when their parents were not at home.

"A mule kicked daddy and actually left an indentation in his skull," said Denver. "His older brothers took some mud from the mule

lot and put it on daddy's head to stop the bleeding. At first they didn't plan to tell their parents because they knew they were not supposed to play there, but of course they had to. He never went to a doctor, but he always had this scar on his forehead. Daddy always combed his hair kinda odd, flipping it over to one side and it was kind of piled high in the front. When he went outside the house he always wore a hat to hide that scar." he said.

"Another thing Denver's daddy always did was to take a table-spoon full of whiskey before his meals," said Laverne. "He'd always measure it out in the spoon before his meal."

"Well, he began that when he developed low blood pressure, and a doctor over in Lake Butler told him, 'Tom, if you'll take a little sip of whiskey before each meal it will increase your appetite,' so he did," said Denver. " He'd measure it out in the spoon just like he was measuring medicine. And he'd give us youngins' a sip if we wanted it. Once he did we never wanted anymore of it, because it would burn our throats."

My mother was the last of her brothers and sisters to die. She lived to the age of ninety-one." Denver Dicks, September 1994

Thomas and Georgia Dicks generated many more interesting stories as they lived their lives and reared their children through the pioneering early turn of the century days and on through the historically acclaimed Great Depression when some men survived and some didn't. To capture a small sketch of those times, told by others who shared those days with them, is priceless information and certainly a work of love.

Thomas and Georgia Dicks left behind a legacy that casts much honor on their names and one of which they can be very proud. Unless the first-hand stories are shared by this passing generation, their individual characters will pass into oblivion. It is hoped that in some way, the contribution made here, by members of their family, will serve to enhance their memory, much more so than just having their names etched on a tombstone placed in a cemetery plot, or on some record in a dusty courthouse basement.

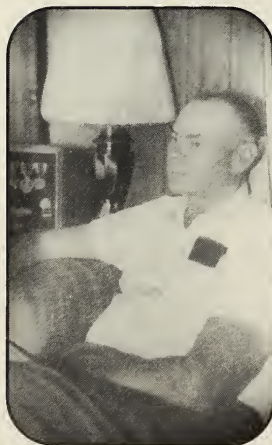


Edgar Kirkland as a young soldier in WW II said his experiences as a poor sharecropper's son saved his life while he served in Europe during WW II. He returned home a decorated hero, but never discussed it with his family until half a century later.



Until December 1993, Edgar Kirkland never discussed his WW II war experiences with his family. In 1995 photo, Edgar on right, shows his brother Bob his many medals. Bob said he never knew his brother was a 'War Hero'.

December 1993



Edgar Kirkland, in home of his niece Dollie Kirkland Register, discusses for the first time his WW II war experiences that made him a hero.



Bob Kirkland discusses his brother Edgar's WW II experiences for the first time. U S A Today Newspaper that he brought home from Europe when war was over.

Edgar Kirkland of Macclenny

December 1993

"We moved around a lot, sharecropping, and the old houses we lived in you could throw a cat through the walls."

Edgar Kirkland

"He was straddling me with a bayonet in one hand and a hand grenade in the other. Then suddenly I felt him reach down and touch my body, ripping off my watch. thankfully he walked away and left me for dead."

Edgar Kirkland

More than 50 years ago, in December 1943, when Edgar "Ed" Kirkland stepped off the Greyhound bus on Main Street in Macclenny, there was no hero's welcome, although in his frayed and shabby duffle-bag, he carried many medals -- among them the Purple Heart, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Good Conduct, WW II European Theater of Operations medals and Infantry badge. The Baker County farm boy had come home without fanfare and that's the way it has always been because, until now, Ed Kirkland has never talked about what made him an unsung hero.

Twenty-year-old Kirkland left Macclenny on November 22, 1942, after being inducted into Uncle Sam's Army to help win a raging war being fought on European soil. With little combat training, he left Virginia on a boat that took 26 days to reach his destination of Italy. Kirkland had lost 26 pounds from seasickness. He was immediately tagged as a rifleman and sent to the front lines where he found that his Baker County training as a poor backwoods sharecropper's son had prepared him for survival -- more so than many of the fallen city soldiers from across America that fought with him.

Kirkland's luck ran out when his unit of the 85th Infantry Division was ambushed by Germans on a routine patrol one day about two years later.

"The Germans just run out and cut us down with bullets, then they threw hand- grenades at us. When I came to that day, my body was covered with blood, my head was coiled around on my stomach and I could feel the heel of a German soldier's combat boot slightly touch my body. He was straddling me with a bayonet in one hand and a hand grenade in the other. Then suddenly I felt him reach down and touch my body, ripping off my watch, which had been a gift from my brother-in-law. Thankfully, he walked away and left me for dead," Kirkland said.

Kirkland was thirsty but had no water. In his pocket were a few sulfa pills that he had been warned not to take without water. His pain was too great, so he chewed them up anyway. Next to him a young 17-year-old soldier began to moan. "Water, water, please give me some water," he begged. Kirkland told him there was no water. Not long after, the young soldier's voice grew faint, then ceased. Everything was quiet, and Kirkland said he realized that he was the sole survivor of the attack.

American medics slipped in after dark to reach the carnage. Kirkland, barely alive, was loaded on a stretcher and carried half way down the mountain. At that point, the task was turned over to German prisoners of war who stumbled and fell on the rough terrain, rolling Kirkland off the stretcher three times. When Kirkland reached one of the M.A.S.H. Units, his wounds were cleansed. He had been shot six times. One bullet was lodged in his lungs. A buckle from his combat boot was embedded in his ankle.

Kirkland was flown to Naples where he underwent an operation for his injuries.

Back in Baker County, Kirkland's mother, Dollie (Carrol) Kirkland Johnson, was dutifully notified by telegram of his injuries. Joe Kirkland, his father, had deserted the family before his birth, leaving Dollie to manage their 10 children alone.

"I guess he had all he could take. In about three years, Mama remarried a man named Ealie Johnson, who had ten children too.

Then he and Mama had three of their own so that was 23 all together," he said.

"We moved around a lot, sharecropping, and the old houses we lived in, you could throw a cat through the walls. We never did have anything but an old fireplace to keep us warm, and all us kids would gang up together to sleep at night with warm quilts that Mama made us."

Kirkland said he never saw his biological father. "He died when I was 17 years old. He never sent Mama one dime for us kids. I didn't go to his funeral," he said.

Kirkland said he'd always been told that when he was born he was so tiny he had to be carried around on a pillow and that his skin was so transparent you could see the intestines in his body.

"Mama was so undernourished and I'm sure that's why. My daddy had left her with 10 kids and nothing else. We were both lucky to survive."

"I only went to the 6th grade in school, then I had to quit and help Mama sharecrop. We mostly raised what we ate. Us kids would go out and pick a bushel of peas in the field and Mama would cook 'em in a big ole pot and we'd have grits and corn bread and some kind of hog meat. We drank cow's milk when we had it. Back then there was no fence law and the piney wood's cows would roam up to the house to sleep in the road at night. Us boys would go out there to catch 'em and hold 'em until one of the other kids could milk 'em. Sometimes we'd get 'em upside the fence and stick one of his old horns through the fence and we'd hold the other horn and then milk 'em while she'd kick. We'd take a pot and sit it down under her. Her little udders were so little we'd have to milk with our fingers like this," he said, pressing two fingers together with his large rough hands.

"Us boys stayed in the river fishing when we weren't working in the fields. That was food on our table. Sometimes, we'd go at night, and even if we got home at midnight mama would get up and fry 'em so we could all eat. We knew where every log was in that river," he said. "We learned early on how to survive."

"Mama's livelihood depended on us children because my step-father, who really was very good to us, had a stroke when I was about seven, and never could do anything else again," he said.

That early survival helped him endure the long patrols and meager conditions through Italy, outsmarting the enemy, surviving three major battles and numerous attacks. Kirkland found out he was as strong as the strongest. Today he realizes that even more.

"Some of them soldiers would just cling to us crying and hollering for their mama," he said. "We'd stay out for weeks in the cold with only a rock for our heads, and even when they'd pull us back for a couple of weeks for R&R, it was hard on most of 'em trying to sleep and rest in the cold and damp army tents. Some of 'em just wasn't cut out for it like I was," he said.

"I walked all the way through Rome running the enemy to the other side and I walked all over the little Alps," he said. "My job was to hunt Germans. We'd march continually, camping at night, sometimes we could even hear them talking we were so close. When we'd come up on 'em, or them us, we'd have it out right there. Most of the time we'd beat 'em," he said. "There were many times when I'd be on the front lines for two weeks at a time that I wouldn't even pull my shoes off or change my clothing. The Army would try and send someone up every night with three little cans of rations each. Then they would fill our water canteens. Sometimes they didn't come so we'd do without. We never had enough food and water but we always had plenty of bullets," he said. "When we'd kill the Germans we used a little shovel to dig a shallow hole to put him in and cover him up, all except for his feet. We'd leave them sticking up."

"What about the injured?" I asked him. "We wouldn't injure 'em. He'd be dead when we left him," he said emphatically.

Kirkland said if his patrol came upon a dead German soldier they never took anything from the body or touched him in any way.

"We learned never to take anything off of 'em, 'cause if you did, the Germans might have a booby trap on him, like a hand grenade, and when you turned the body over the pin would pull out and blow you up. Americans put booby traps on our soldiers, too, and if the Germans came to rob him, they'd get blown up," he said.

Then came the day in December 1945 when he had accumulated enough points to come home. Was he prepared? Had he received psychotherapy to deal with the trauma of front line war and the serious injuries he'd received?

"No, there were too many of us wounded. You just toughed it out or died one," he said.

The Greyhound bus doors swung open, let him off, and hissed closed. He looked around. Not too much had changed. Hopefully he would find his mama at home. No one had notified her of his homecoming. There were few phones back then and his mama wasn't one of the lucky ones who had one. An old friend, Leonard Mikell, came by in his car, and offered him a ride home. He was glad. He was anxious.

"I got out of Leonard's car and saw Mama sitting at her sewing machine," he said. "She was..." -- his voice broke, as tears welled up in his piercing blue eyes and fell gently down his rugged cheeks -- "She was . . . well, she was real glad to see me. She and my sister, Rosie, began spreading the word to the family that I'd come home. We gathered together and sat up all night talking. They were all real happy to see me."

No one mentioned the war, or his injuries, that night or ever. Maybe they were waiting on him, and maybe he was waiting on them. He doesn't know. So he pushed it to the back of his mind where it has been hidden until this interview.

"The government gives me a small pension and all of my medicines. I've had open heart surgery twice. They give me glasses but not dental. I've been trying to get some more out of 'em for about a year now but they won't do anything about it. They can carry it off and give it to these other countries, you see, but they won't give it to us."

He recently framed his medals. He hopes that the two children, Penny and Jeanie, who were biological sisters that he and first wife, Camilla, adopted, will want them someday, or perhaps his grandchildren.

Today, Kirkland lives with his second wife, Nona Holloway, on the banks of the St. Johns River in Palatka, next door to his son and daughter-in-law, Rex and Flo Holloway. Flo is the daughter of Harold and Fay Milton of Macclenny.

"I fish when I want to, and keep the grass mowed," he said. "It's real peaceful there. I don't think about the war, I don't even watch war movies on TV. It upsets me when I hear the guns. Where I live, I can only hear the birds chirping and sounds of the woods."

Kirkland treasures the memories of his family. He considers his heritage one of great wealth.

His mother died in 1966. He misses her. She may never have known about his war experiences, or his many medals, but that's okay. One thing he knows for certain and it matters the most: It was the endurance through his earlier days with a strong family background of love and survival together that made him a hero. He saw that in his family's face when he came marching home -- alone -- that day, and that was the best, most lasting, and most necessary hero's welcome of all.

Annie Rhoden Combs of Sanderson, Florida

1993

She loved to dance -- and had a melodious voice.

"My older sister had tried to tell me what to expect when I got married, but I didn't believe it. But, I believed her later."

Annie Mae Combs

Annie Mae (Rhoden) Combs has lived almost a century in Baker County. Her once strong and melodious voice that frequently rang out in harmonious gospel tunes is barely audible above a whisper now and her former active life is more sedate and tranquil. But her bright eyes twinkle and a ready smile creases her face when she talks about "the joy of her life," her husband of 40 years. Fred Combs died in 1964, but Annie likes to remember things that remind her of him.

She was one of eight children born to dark haired, blue eyed Easter Ann Raulerson and William (Billy) Rhoden "somewhere in Baker County" on September 11, 1906. Her parents, who married in Baker County on February 17, 1895, lived most of their lives in the Cuyler section of the county.

It was a loving home where Annie remembers being rocked on her daddy's lap while he told her wonderful stories, or perched on her mother's knee listening to old fashioned Primitive Baptist gospel tunes. When she was of age, Annie walked the three miles to the three-room Cuyler schoolhouse with her siblings, Ulyss, Hassie, Roy, Carl, Thelma, and Myrtle Lee. Here she finished the seventh grade before marrying Fred Combs at the age of 18.

The couple first met at a county-wide singing convention, an event quite popular at the turn of the century in Baker County.



1 Annie Combs, daughter Mary Carolyn (Mrs. Watson Goodwin) Fred Combs and John Parnell Combs, father of Fred

**2 Fred Combs, Sr.
April 15, 1877-June 20, 1963
SON OF: John Parnell Combs**

3 Annie Mae Combs

**4 Fred, Annie, Mary Carolyn and Fred Combs, Jr. "Bunnie"
AT HOME IN SANDERSON**

**5 Courtney Taylor Combs, mother of Fred Combs, Sr., wife of John Parnell Combs.
Died four days after this picture was made. Buried at Taylor, Florida.
EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 1957
Died April 25, 1957**

"I liked him right away, thought he was the cutest thing I'd ever seen," she smiled. "And he left the girl he was with to come sit with me, so I knew he liked me too," she said in a 1993 interview.

Fred received permission from Billy Rhoden to court his pretty daughter. He was allowed to "come calling" but it was understood that "time was up" at 8 o'clock. Annie's parents, and the rest of the family, usually joined the couple on the front porch of the home while they courted.

Annie helped her parents on the farm doing all the usual farm chores. There was always something to do as the family grubbed a scant living from the poor soil. There was little or no money for many of the things we take for granted today, she said. For instance, the family used frayed oak twigs for toothbrushes while soda or salt substituted for their toothpaste.

"If you had a toothache back then you just pulled it out because there were no dentists available," she said with a shudder. Her brother, Hassie, was called to serve in the Army in France during World War I, and Annie's family worried about his safe return. They knew life was fragile. A baby brother named Clyde had died. But Hassie survived the war.

Mother Easter Ann made the family's clothes on a pedal machine. "There was no such thing as nice wool sweaters or coats to wear," Annie said, adding that her mother made the family's warm coats from flannel material.

Her grandparents, Newt and Dora Ann (Thompson) Rhoden lived in walking distance of her home and she visited them often. And the family shared many meals together.

She remembers that the Rhoden family held many square dances in their home and that her father stood guard to make sure things went well because in those days many people drank moonshine.

It was important to her father for families to enjoy being together without any problems. Annie loved to dance. And she admits, "before I met Fred, I was a big flirt with the boys." She had lots of boyfriends who would visit her at home; they listened to the radio or just talked on the front porch.

When the Rhoden's neighbors had square dances in their homes, the family would hitch up their mule and wagon and attend. But the ride home was intensely dark with only the twinkling stars and beaming moon offering them dim light as they rumbled along the sandy country road. No one even thought of danger like being robbed or harmed in anyway, she said. There were no locks on their door at home because, she noted, "there were no such things as intruders."

Annie remembers seeing her first car one day when she and her family were traveling down the dusty dirt road in their mule-hauled wagon on their way to a singing convention. The car was driven by Mr. Knabb.

"He pulled up beside our ole mule and invited my daddy and mama to take a ride with him. Some of us children got to come along too while my oldest brother drove the mule on home. It was a great invention, that car!" she said.

Church was also the hub of the family's social life in turn-of-the-century Baker County. At one Sunday School box supper, Annie had prepared a delicious box dinner for a lucky bidder -- Fred, she hoped. But Fred lost his bid to another boy who was anxious to impress Annie.

"They almost fought, but I still had to eat with the other boy," said Annie. "However, Fred came over to me later on and said, 'let's get married'. And I said, 'Well I'll have to think about it, ' but it didn't take me long to say 'yes','" she said.

The Rev. Earl Taylor married the couple February 1, 1925 on the front porch of her parent's home. Annie was 18. Fred, who was born in Baker County on September 17, 1904, was 20.

"My older sister had tried to tell me what to expect after I got married, but I didn't believe it," she said shaking her head. "But I believed it later!" she laughed.

Life for the couple was not easy, even though they lived with Fred's parents. It was during the Great Depression. The family ate a lot of lima beans and white bacon, Annie remembers. Fred would often go into the woods to kill birds for their supper or catch fish in the nearby river or creek. He worked at a sawmill for a while and Annie described their home as resembling a chicken house that was thrown together.

She had her first child, Willie, on November 25, 1925. At the sawmill (or log camp as it was often referred to), she and her little son, Willie, rode up and down the tracks on the log train to pass the time. And Fred taught Annie to drive a log truck. Sometimes, she said, they'd even go into Lake City on the log train to see a movie.

When Fred's sister-in-law, Agnes, died from complications in childbirth 11 days after her son was born, Annie and Fred took the baby into their home. Fred's brother, Russell, who was the baby's father, had named his little son Fred Combs, Jr. in Fred's honor. The couple called him "Bunny" and he instantly became as one of their own. Until they could get the baby's formula regulated, he was nursed by Rosa Taylor, who had a small son named Aubrey (In later years Bunny married Rosa's niece). Bunny's two older siblings, Betty Lou, aged two, and Russell Jr., aged four, remained with their father after he married Corene Raulerson. The couple then had nine children of their own.

It was 15 years after the birth of her first child, Willie, that Annie gave birth to her only daughter, Mary Carolyn.

Like many other men in the county, Fred indulged in drinking but after his marriage and birth of the children, he gave it up and become a minister. Ofttimes during his sermons he would preach about his conversion. He would tell personal stories -- like the time he stole a bible from a restaurant in Lake City. After he was converted to another way of life he returned to the restaurant to make restitution.

During the early '30's the couple met in the homes of friends and neighbors to practice their Congregational Methodist religion but, when the group began to grow, Fred, with the help of some other men, built bush arbors throughout the area to house the growing attendance.

Then in 1936, Fred and some other members of the local congregations, who were seeking a deeper spiritual experience than the Methodist group was offering at the time, heard about the Congregational Holiness Church. They traveled to the church's headquarters and campgrounds in Carrollton, Georgia, to attend one of the denomination's conferences and to learn more about it. They were

very impressed with the Holiness doctrine and movement and returned to Baker County to share their new-found knowledge with the other local church members. Many, like Fred, were looking for a doctrine built on the laying on of hands and one that believed in receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. And, too, locally there was much discontentment over the subject of music. Some members did not believe the church should have music and some, like Fred, did.

Many of the Congregational Methodist members converted to the new movement and thus began the first Congregational Holiness Church movement in Florida. Fred served as State Superintendent of the Florida Church Conference for 18 years. Today there are 16 such denominations throughout Florida, two active in Baker County, one in Sanderson, and another in Manntown, south of Glen St. Mary. At one time there was a church of this order in Taylor.

In 1946 the couple bought a modest little home in Sanderson for \$1,200. The family did without indoor plumbing until 1956, but Fred had installed a bathtub for the family on the back porch and they hauled water from a hand pump in the back yard to fill it when they bathed. Many couples married on the front porch of their home and until his death not one couple that he married had divorced.

Fred served as Baker County's Road Superintendent for 19 years. In those days it was Fred and a three-man crew who tended to all of the county's roadways, often using mule teams to pull the road graders. The church grew as Fred preached wonderful sermons at the Sanderson Congregational Holiness Church where he and Annie often sang duets together. As the children flourished and grew, Annie enjoyed her role as a minister's wife and mother. She entertained many visiting revival ministers and once hosted a missionary from India in their home.

She was an excellent seamstress. In addition to sewing for individuals she was contacted annually to make the graduation dresses for the student graduates in the black elementary school in Sanderson. For a short time she worked as a cook at the Sanderson school cafeteria. At the time, Mary Carolyn was four years old and the teachers let her sit in the first grade class with the other students while Annie worked. When she turned five, the first grade teacher,

Eunice Dobson Burnett, was willing to have her stay in the class but said she would have to study the same as the other children. When the school term ended that year, Annie gave up her cafeteria job, but her bright little daughter passed easily into second grade and eventually graduated from Baker County High School at age 16.

As the Church's Superintendent in Florida, Fred was often invited to participate in revivals and deliver sermons for other Congregational Holiness churches. He worked for the county from 7 a.m. until 4 p.m.. Annie would have supper prepared when he arrived home and then the couple, with Mary Carolyn, would drive as far away as Palatka to preach, and most of the time it was late into the night when they would drive back home to Sanderson. With little sleep, Fred reported for work early the next day, and Mary Carolyn to school.

Sometimes the revivals would last as long as two weeks, but Fred would faithfully drive back and forth each day and night. There were many times when he had to pay his own travel expenses. Sometimes the church would take up a "love offering" or supplement his expenses by giving him food from member's gardens. He was dedicated to his ministry, regardless of the sacrifice.

Annie and Fred loved gospel music and often sang together during church services and in revivals, accompanied by their daughter on the piano. Annie's favorite song is "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder, I'll Be There."

Music in the church was so important to Fred that he started his little daughter on piano at the age of six. Mary Carolyn became the first piano student of Virginia (Crews) Combs whose grandfather, Willie Crews, Sr., was pastor of the church at Manntown. The piano lessons cost twenty-five cents. Today she is one of the most accomplished pianists in the county.

Church and family were the most important things in the couple's life. They adhered closely to the strict church doctrine, however they allowed their children a certain amount of freedom of choice. For example, their son, Bunny, played basketball, even though they didn't attend the games. Mary Carolyn was a member of the school band, but they never attended a performance. As time went on they reluctantly purchased a television. Annie did not cut her hair, or wear

make-up. It was against church doctrine. Her daughter had to comply with those rules as well. Annie's mother, who was of the Primitive Baptist faith, lived the last five years of her life with Annie and Fred and they saw that she regularly attended her church services until she became an invalid.

Fred and Annie never turned down a calling regardless of how far away it was. They enjoyed the opportunities they had to share their faith and testimonies. On one such occasion, in 1964, the couple had gone to Douglas, Georgia. Annie remembers that Fred was preaching a good sermon when suddenly he stopped speaking and went to sit down. Other ministers quickly gathered around him. In minutes an ambulance was summoned and Fred was hospitalized. It was his heart.

"I was standing outside his hospital door. I knew it was bad. Then they came and told me he was gone. He was the joy of my life and, oh yes, I look forward to being with him again someday," she said.

After Fred's death, Annie had little income. She was an excellent cook, and obtained employment with the Macclenny School Cafeteria where she worked for many years.

She underwent open heart surgery at the age of 78 in 1984. In 1985 she suffered a stroke. Her once beautiful waist-length hair that had never been cut because "I kept the old ways in our religion," is now bobbed short for easier maintenance. Her rosy complexion is almost as smooth as it was in her teens, and she tells her secret for beauty: "I've always used Jergens, Ponds or Avon Moisture Cream," she notes proudly. She respects the "old timey ways" of her church and wears no make-up, except for Coty powder.

She enjoys having her children stop by for visits, and they faithfully do. Bunny, who has worked for 30 years as a correction officer in Raiford, and his wife Faye (Yarborough) have five children -- Charlotte, Jared, Renee, Clayton and Bruce. Willie, who lives in Folkston, served in World War II and the Korean War. He later retired as a diesel mechanic. He has a son Freddie. Willie and his wife, Alice (who died during open heart surgery), had an adopted daughter, Dana; a daughter, Durenda, and a son, James, who are all deceased. Mary Carolyn and her hus-

band, Watson Goodwin, operate Watson's Supermarket in Sanderson. They have a son, Ricky. All together they have presented her with 10 grandchildren.

"Life in Baker County has been good to me and if I could leave a message to my family and friends that I'll always be remembered by after I'm gone, I'd say, 'Live a good life and raise your children right. Then when the roll is called up yonder we'll all be there.'"

* * *

Annie Combs died in Riverside hospital on February 13, 1994 following the death on January 27 of her oldest child, Willie. She is buried in Taylor Cemetery next to her beloved husband, Fred, who preceded her in death by 30 years.

On August 19, 1994, the Florida District of Congregational Holiness Church, at their annual camp meeting held in the tabernacle in Glen St. Mary, presented Annie's children with an honorary plaque that reads:

UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

In loving memory this plaque is dedicated to Sister Annie Combs for her faith and commitment to God and her church. Because of her example, the Florida Congregational Holiness District is strong and thriving today.

The plaque holds a distinctive place of honor in the new Congregational Holiness Church in Sanderson.



1 Sippie and Ralph Hartenstine

2 Aaron Canaday and Bo Canaday

3 Ralph Hartenstine

4 Sippie Canaday Harris Hartenstine



Sippie Canaday Harris Hartenstine

1993

"When the Morris House first started serving dinners in 1940 they charged 35 cents for weekday meals and 50 cents on Sunday. During the war prices were frozen at 50 and 75 cents."

Sippie Hartenstine

It has been as American as apple pie, the life of Sippie Canaday Harris Hartenstine. Like the ornate plants and colorful flowers she grows all around her modest white frame home on north College Street, she has lived a remarkable life. Always neat and orderly, always making things beautiful, she is as exceptional as the era of time she has thus far lived through.

Like her many plants, her life has been varied, but with lots of tender loving care, she, like them, has blossomed.

Born in Charlton County, Georgia, 83 years ago, Sippie was the last of eight children born to Aaron Canaday, a prosperous cattleman and farmer and his wife, Alice Crawford Canaday. Her mother died in childbirth when she was two.

The oldest of her sisters, Sarah (who later married Benjamin Foy Fish), became her mentor until her father remarried. And, though the marriage to Rosa Mae Rhoden dissolved after a few years, she acquired a brother, Otis, from the union, whom she adores.

"When I was a little girl, my father would catch a train in Moniac about twice a year and go into Jacksonville to buy staples in large quantities -- such as a barrel of flour and large sacks of rice and sugar," she said. "He'd buy large bags of green coffee and then we'd roast it and grind it with an old-fashioned hand grinder."

Sippie said she and her brother Lonnie would usually get to go with him. "We'd buy our supplies and arrange to have them shipped

to us. Then daddy would take me and Lonnie across the St. John's River on the ferry boat to the south bank where there was a zoo. In those days there wasn't a bridge across the river like today," she said.

As she grew up in those lean Depression years, she became indispensable to the community and her name became synonymous with charitable work. It was a time when neighbors helped neighbors and she assisted everyone possible. She taught others how to sew and cook and when a neighbor died, she helped to make the casket linings for the homemade cypress caskets because, at the time, there was no local funeral home available to residents. The chore would usually take all night. Many times she helped to bathe the corpse and lay the body on a cooling board, covering it with a sheet. Two pennies were placed on the eyes to close them. Then she helped dress and ready the corpse for burial.

"In those days all the women wore their hair long and would usually style it in a large ball on the back of their heads, " she said. "That's the way they were laid to rest in those days."

Sippie helped widowed neighbors care for their young children, cutting their hair, sewing their clothes, teaching them responsibilities around the home and how to prepare for life in many ways, never wavering in her generosity.

As she grew older, she developed a thirst for knowledge and she attended South Georgia Junior State College in Douglas, Georgia, to pursue a teaching career. After she passed the test and acquired a teaching certificate, she joined other area natives — like the late B.R. Burnsed and his wife, Myrtle, Rev. George Chism, former Baker County Sheriff Paul Thrift, and Rubye Crews — teaching school in the county. She remembers some of her students as the Katie Long, Orie Crawford, Wardie Powell and Cleo Canaday.

While still in the grip of the Great Depression, Sippie married county native Vandie Harris at the home of a Reverend Rhoden in Macclenny. The year was 1929. The couple moved in with her mother-in-law, Emma Harris, who was widowed. They also shared the house with Vandie's brother, Isaiah, and his wife, Bertha Mae (Rewis). The day her son Van was born, the family gathered, as it was customary. It was cold, and they pushed her bed next to the fireplace for warmth. The county's physician, Dr. P.A. Brinson, delivered her son.

In about a year the little family found a place of their own near Taylor. Another son, Dwight, was delivered by a neighbor midwife, Phanie Harvey. Sippie settled into housekeeping, Vandie farmed, and she became the first president of Taylor P.T.A. She sewed all the family's clothes on a pedal machine, and used cloth diapers for her babies, washing them without modern equipment such as running water or electricity.

Then, in 1941, things changed for the family. Vandie took a job with United Life Insurance Company and the couple purchased the little white frame house at 64 College Street, where she has lived for more than five decades.

"When my father died, I used my inheritance to attend beauty school, something I had always wanted to do," she said. After she graduated, six months later, she took a job with Mrs. Della Dykes at Dykes Beauty Shop. Later, she opened her own shop on the south side of her home, which became "Sippie's Beauty Centre". From her working station, she has been able to watch the bustling activity on Main Street as well as the neighbor children grow up and away for more than 50 years.

When the Harris family moved onto the block, they were surrounded by neighbors with small children who played cowboys and Indians together as well as marbles on the then unpaved sandy road. Some grew up, like her son Van, to play on Macclenny's first football team. Dwight played both football and basketball.

Some of her neighbors, and their children, were the Frank Wells (Betty Jean), Richard and Carrie Davis (Violet, Katherine and Dickie), Joe and Homie Dobson (JoAnn and Joey) and Leo and Ada Dykes (Johnny, Wiley, Dub, Billy and Ruby), George and Alma Raulerson and some of their younger children (Violice, James, Sara and Gedone).. Kate Wolfe and Mrs. Walter Dobson were her back-door neighbors.

The telephone company was directly across the street and the operators (one of whom was the late Dorothy Byrd) kept everyone abreast of anything eventful going on. The owner at the time was Mattie Thompson. The neighborhood was always full of activity.

"We only had to walk straight down the block to the Morris House to eat, and we did regularly, because I couldn't cook as cheap as

we could eat out," she said. " And, too, I was busy with my flourishing business from sunup to sundown."

The two-story landmark Morris House was a gathering place for almost everyone in Macclenny, especially those who worked. It was operated from 1940 to 1957 by Georgia natives P.L. and Mary Jane Morris, who moved into the county in 1929. Their boarding and dining house was renowned and patronized by governors and U.S. Senators. Because Mrs. Morris felt it was more economical, the food was always cooked on a wood burning stove. Sippie, Vandie and the boys joined other town people, estimated at one time by the Morris couple to be 150 a day. They sat at the long banquet table while they were served bowl after bowl of hot, delicious, home-cooked food that was available to customers three times a day, seven days a week.

"When they first started serving dinners in 1940, they charged 35 cents for weekday meals and 50 cents on Sunday. During the war, prices were frozen at 50 and 75 cents," she said.

"When the Morris family closed the famed dining room in 1957, dinners were \$1.29 including tax, and 50 cents for small children," she said, adding that the famous eatery was closed in 1957 because the couple's earnings exceeded the maximum amount permitted while collecting retirement benefits from Social Security . That, she said, ended one of the last of its kind when it faded from the American scene.

The family also enjoyed Baker County's other landmark eatery, the famous Hotel Annie, which was a block in the other direction near the present-day Chamber of Commerce on Main Street.

" People from Jacksonville and other surrounding areas would drive out to eat, especially on Sundays," she said. "And they were famous for their delicious fried chicken."

"It was a great time to be raising children," she said. "We didn't worry about them so much in those days."

Former neighbor Dickie Davis remembers when he and the other neighbor children would hide behind the trees with sling shots, particularly when Mr. Martin Barber came to town on Saturday. "He always came in his horse and wagon for grocery shopping at Ira Walker's store located where the present-day Senior Citizen Center is," said Davis.

"We'd hit the ole horse and cause him to rear up," he said, with a mischievous smile on his face. He also remembers the area children gathering at the local bowling alley, located directly across from the downtown Chevron station.

"It was run by Billy Walker's daddy," he said. "It was the first bowling alley I'd ever seen and we could bowl for ten cents. All of us had a good time hanging out there."

Davis said many good times were had on the block and he remembers Sippie's family with fond memories. He remains close to her children and others who lived on the block as well. "Back then we were really like a big family," he said.

At the time Sippie was raising her sons, the county had a large community center where the children gathered to play basketball and hold community events. It was built by the WPA.

"I traveled all over when my boys played ball," said Sippie. "There were four of us mothers who never missed a game and we all rode together for years."

Her friends, all gone now, were Carrie Davis (mother of Dickie), Anna Newmans (mother of our former sheriff, Joe), Mable Chessman (mother of LuClare, Noel and Dewitt), and Beatrice Piatt (mother of Alvin).

In 1958, after 29 years together, Vandie died. Sippie kept working in her beauty shop with regular customers she had coiffed for two decades. Then she met county native Earl Walker in 1960, remarried and continued to live in the same location. In 1966 Earl died. In 1969 she married retired Lt. Col. Ralph Hartenstine and, until his death in 1992, the two spent 23 happy years together.

"The house holds many memories," she said. "That's why I'd never want to move away."

Her son, Van, is a retired engineer who lives with his wife, Sharon, in Atlantic Beach. Dwight is a pharmacist with a large firm in Orlando, where he and his wife, Sara, live.

She enjoys tending her yards and still busies herself in the beauty shop with faithful customers, one who is 97, and another 100. Her prices, once 50 cents for a shampoo and \$2.50 for a perm, have kept up with inflation, of course. Gone are the days of the antiquated heated-clamp perming machine that easily burned her customers'

hair. Gone are the neighbors (except for Marjorie Wells), and the bustling, bustling days of the active neighborhood families. Gone are the Morris House and Hotel Annie, the bowling alley, movie theater, and community center. Gone are her three husbands, and most of her friends. But still around are memories and still around is the enormous desire she has to be of service.

In 1992 the local Sertoma Club bestowed on her their most coveted tribute, the annual "Service To Mankind" award.

If she is not in her yard, she can be found mingling and reminiscing with the few old timers left who remember the "good old days." She is active in the Woman's Club and cherishes her relationships with many friends that she has made throughout her long life in the county. She has been an active member of the First Baptist Church of Macclenny for 45 years. In 1954, she served as Worthy Matron of the local Leona Knabb Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star. She is a member of the Baker County Historical Society and Friends of the Frank Wells Nursing Home. Through her participation in these and many other community activities she has made a storehouse of friends.

Sippie never fails to support any worthwhile activity for the community. When an effort was made to place park benches on Main Street in memory or honor of others, one of the first to contribute was Sippie when she purchased one in honor of Ralph. She requested that it be placed in front of the Chamber of Commerce Building because of Ralph's continuous contributions and support to activities that pertained to building up the community.

Although her pace has slowed physically, she never fails to keep up with what is going on around her, and stays in close contact with her friends and family.

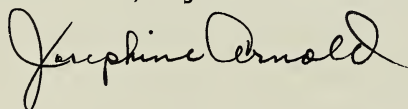
Often, her brother Otis drops by, laden with fresh vegetables he grows year-round in his garden, and she cooks them up for her friends. She not only tends her flowers and shrubs, but she is still assisting those in need. She is a remarkable person.

And though the world around her may have changed, and in many instances even disappeared, Sippie Hartenstine still rates the same -- she is just as downhome as apple pie has always been.

Josephine Kirkland Crawford Arnold

1994 Macclenny, Florida

"I can remember being hungry for some things we didn't have like a loaf of bread. I'd see some of the other students eating their sandwiches made out of bread and they'd have mayonnaise and lettuce and tomato. Oh, it just smelled so good."

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josephine Arnold". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large, stylized 'J' and 'A'.

When Dollie Estelle Carroll married Joe Kirkland at the age of fourteen, and began giving birth to the first of her 13 children at age fifteen, and later took on the task of rearing 10 step children when she married George Ealie Johnson, it probably never crossed her mind that she would one day be a study of fortitude for so many of her increasing posterity. When she was disciplining her children with a pear switch with such force that blood streamed down their legs from cuts so deep in the skin it would leave scars for the rest of their lives, little did she stop to think how that punishment would someday bring her praise for being such a caring and loving mother.

When she sent her little children off to school on the bitterest cold days, barefoot and coatless, she never could have suspected that someday the experience would bring tears of deepest compassion to the eyes of her aging children as they looked back on those days with such great clemency for her efforts in doing the best she could under the most difficult circumstances.

Those of her surviving children speak with the greatest of respect and adoration for the woman they thought of as mother and father, and they hope her legacy will live on with the deepest of esteem in the hearts and minds of her posterity forever.

Josephine (Jody) Kirkland Crawford Arnold weeps easily when she looks back on the life of her mother, a tiny woman with a heart

bigger than she was, and stamina and fortitude greater than anyone can imagine, she said. Josephine was the ninth of her mother's 10 children born to the marriage of Joe Kirkland, an alcoholic and abusive man.

"My mother told me that when she gave birth to me in a country sharecropper's shack south of Sanderson on February 4, 1919, she took the influenza three days later, along with some of her older children. There was nobody there to help her out and she asked my daddy to hand her a glass of water and he told her if she wanted a glass of water, she could get up and get it herself.

"Mama said blood, caused from my delivery, ran from her bed to the fireplace. She said when she changed my diaper my skin peeled off. She told me that it was a miracle I survived. She explained that she and her stricken children took castor oil, that's all they had, and they survived. When mama got to feeling a little better, she got up to try and clean the big old heavy iron pots daddy had left dirty. She said she was trying to fix her children something to eat, but she was still too sick and she passed out. Someone, she never knew who, put her back on the bed. She said her mother, Elizabeth Carroll, had the flu, too, and wasn't able to come help. Mama said she didn't know how she survived.

"Mama had a hard time when she was growing up. She said she made all the family's clothes by sewing the garments with her fingers. She was the daughter of John and Elizabeth (Keen) Carrol and grew up poor. She didn't believe in divorce, but after she and daddy moved to Nassau County, she said she was laying across the bed and my daddy's face came to her in a vision-like appearance and she looked into his eyes and saw that they were red and very bloodshot. She said he looked like the devil, and felt that was her clue from the Lord to divorce him, because she doubted he would ever change. Although she was pregnant with her last child by my father, she gave a man all her chickens to drive her to Baker County in his horse and wagon with all her belongings and children. Edgar was born on the old Cox place north of Macclenny after she moved back to Baker County. After mama left our father, I was told by some of his nephews and nieces that he did change and was a loving man. I told them I was sorry but he wasn't nice to us.



Thirteen children of Dollie and Joe Kirkland and Dollie and Ealie Johnson

Front Row: Ealie Johnson, Steve Kirkland, Bob Kirkland, Edgar Kirkland and Tex Johnson

Back Row: Dollie Kirkland Johnson Corbett, Nola (Deese), Mitchell, Lizzie (Crawford), Shubert, J.B. (Kennuck) Kirkland, Josephine (Arnold) and Rosie (Croft)

"After moving around some, we finally settled in Glen, where I grew up and attended school as long as I went, which was the 8th grade. I remember I was in Junior Crockett's class and our teacher was Mrs. Sheppard. Later, mama married a real nice man I grew up to call Papa. He was a widower with 10 children. Then he and mama had three of their own. That made 23 all together. Our house was always full.

"I remember going to school barefoot in real cold weather when I was little. The teacher would let me sit by the old wood stove and warm my feet after I arrived at school. I really didn't think of us being poor. Most everyone was. I can remember being hungry for some things we didn't have, like a loaf of bread. I'd see some of the other students eating their sandwiches made out of bread and they'd have mayonnaise and lettuce and tomato. Oh, it just smelled so good. Mama sent her children to school with a little tin bucket, with maybe some grits in it. We always had meat from the hogs and we might have some tomatoes on our grits, maybe a biscuit, and if we were lucky a piece of pork.

"Mama always made sure we kept our yard and house clean. She made her mops from corn shucks and she used white river sand and lye soap to scrub our floors with. In the kitchen we had a cook table and an eating table. I remember how we'd have to wash dishes in two pans. We'd sit one on the stove to warm while we ate and then wash our dishes in one pan and rinse them in the other pan. We didn't have a living room in our house. We used the rooms for bedrooms

with at least two beds in each room. We didn't have living room furniture, we'd have some straight back chairs and maybe one or two rockers. There was a fireplace to warm by and I remember that mama could spit her snuff from across the room and it would hit perfectly in the fireplace. Our old house had cracks in it, the boards ran up and down instead of crosswise, and hogs and chickens stayed up underneath it at night.

"Mama was real strict with us. She had a whole bunch of boys to manage and she said she could do it much better with all of us on a farm where there wasn't any other people, like there would be in town, and she could keep us busy with work.

"I remember one time when I was in Mr. Giles Bethea's class at school and me and my step-sister, Ethel, played softball. Mr. Bethea was going to take us up to Sanderson for a ball game in his Model A Roadster and we told our brother we were going. He had to go and tell mama, and mama told him, 'No they're not going either, I've got something for them to do at home'. Well, we thought we just had to go to that game, so we went and I remember we beat Sanderson's team that day. Mr. Bethea took us home and put us out. Mama had done got supper and she was ready for us. Lord-a-mercy, she went out to the pear orchard for a switch. She got her two,



Josephine (Kirkland)
and Guy Arnold

about this long," she said, measuring about four feet, "and when she came back she got a hold of me first. It seemed like she never did whip Ethel as bad as she did me, and I thought she was going to kill me. She whipped me with one of 'em until it broke, and then she grabbed the other one and hit me a lick or two before she finished it out on Ethel. Honey, I didn't go to school for about a week and I still got a scar from it," she said," pulling up her slacks leg that revealed a definite scar. "But you know, I never did get mad enough with my mama to say nothing back to her. I never talked back to my mother in my life. The boys didn't either, even after they were grown and mar-

ried. We all still respected our mother. She was just like an old hen with her biddies. She'd fight for you, yet she would get on to you if you needed it. I never disobeyed her again. If she hadn't been the mother she was, there's no telling what we'd have gotten into.

"Mama never did tell us much about ourselves and growing up things like having a period. I think where I first learned that was from my sister-in-law, Corbett's wife. She was my sister-in-law and step-sister too because they got married before mama and papa did. We were out there in the yard washing clothes one day and May told me about women having periods and all, and oh, I thought I can't wait until I'm a women. I was about 15 before I ever started, though. Back in them days, we didn't have sanitary napkins, just old rags and things, and on wash day we'd try to hide them. One day I had a pile of clothes to wash and we had this big old 60-gallon boiler that we boiled them in to get the dirt out along with mama's homemade lye soap. I had the clothes laying down there and some of those rags were laying there, too. My brother, J.B., was sitting there watching us and he started picking up the clothes and said, 'Oh, I know all about what that is. It's when a woman's going to have a baby; you know; all women's got babies inside them'.

"J.B. didn't know no more about it than we did. He thought women had a bunch of babies in them and all you had to do was have one when you wanted it like a chicken laying eggs or something.

"People back then just didn't talk to their children about things like that," she said.

"I remember on wash day, mama would starch our clothes stiff. She would make us these cameo tops out of yellow homespun material to wear beneath our clothes," she said. "They were so stiff after she would starch them that when we girls would wear them next to our skin they rubbed us raw across our breasts. It felt like all the hide came off because we didn't have bras back then. I can't remember having a bra until I got big enough to buy my own," she said.

"The first pair of shoes I ever remember owning was a pair of black patent leather shoes mama ordered from Sears and Roebuck. I bought them with the first money I ever earned. Several of us children walked about two miles to a neighbor's farm to hoe for fifty cents a

day. Those were the longest rows I can ever remember seeing. After we got paid, mama got the Sears Catalog out to order us something with the money we made and I told her I wanted the patent leather shoes. When they arrived they were too small, but I wore them anyway even if the pain just about killed me. Look here at the bunions I still got from wearing shoes too small," she said, shedding her shoes and exhibiting a huge bunion on her foot. She confesses that today shoes are her passion and she can't resist buying pair after pair of them.

"Mama must not have known how to buy the sizes we needed because she would order a coat and it would be way too large, or shoes way too small.

"We had a good mother who tried hard. She was understanding and we could tell her most anything. Even after I got grown I used to get to thinking about her and wonder what I'd do if anything was to happen to her. I couldn't stand to think about her dying. Even after I got married I'd go back home just as much as I could and help her. I'd go on Saturdays and see if she had anything I could do, because there always seemed to be a bunch of people there.

"My step-father had a stroke after they married. He couldn't do much. He was a nice man and I called him papa, and I felt by his children just like my own brothers and sisters. Papa worked for the county and once he had an accident and got a lick on the side of his head driving down a piling on a bridge. That's what caused his stroke. The county gave him \$1,000 and mama took the money and bought us 35 acres that had an old house on it, north of Macclenny near the Macedonia section. We'd never owned nothing until then. Papa and the boys built us a body on a truck and mama made some curtains out of canvas on her sewing machine. They were fixed so they could be rolled down on the side if it was raining or cold, because the boys used it to drive as a school bus. Any money made, we gave to mama and papa to help with our family expenses.

"I went to school in Glen all my life. When I finished the eighth grade I caught the bus over to Macclenny and was in Mrs. O'Hara's room, but I didn't go there long. I knew I was needed at home or to work to help out financially, so Lucile Johns got me on at the canning and soup kitchen in Glen.

"Then one day she told me that Mrs. Ruth Cone over in Macclenny needed someone to help her clean house when she got out of the hospital and she would pay me \$3 a week. So I moved into Mrs. Cone's house. She had a daughter named Emily. It was my job to keep the house clean and cook. She paid me an extra \$1.50 if I did the laundry, so I tried to make the extra money. Her husband's name was Branch and he lived in Tallahassee during the week and came home on weekends. His brother, Fred, was the governor of Florida and he married Mildred Thompson.

"Every weekend, I'd have to clean chickens on Saturday for Sunday dinner. I wrung their necks, scalded and cleaned a couple of fryers, and Mrs. Cone would make her own mayonnaise in a little crock pot with eggs, lemon juice and oil. I stayed in a little room on back of the porch right off the kitchen. She was real good to me. She had parties, and I vacuumed her house with the first vacuum cleaner I'd ever seen. She had wicker furniture in her living room, and a rug. I'd never seen things like this before. She let me drive her car and I could go to the store for her, and she let me visit mama.

"When she was moving to Tallahassee we went there and stayed in the governor's mansion for a week. During the day we'd go over to a house they were going to move into and clean and fix it up for their move. At the mansion, we had Negro maids and butlers that cooked, served the meals and waited on us hand and foot. I could have gotten used to it, I think.

"When I left the Cone's house, I went to work for Will and Leona Knabb doing the same thing, except this time I had to kill and dress duck for Sunday dinner. They had a woman who cooked, but I washed dishes and cleaned house. Their children were Eloise, Billie and James, and their daughter Loyce lived with her husband, Jack, and son, Bobby, across the street. They treated me just like family. Eloise and I shared a room. When Macclenny got street lights for the first time, I can remember one night particularly when Eloise and I went with her dad and mother just riding around looking at them. Eloise and I were the same age, and shared the same birthdays. Their house at the time was a big old one story wooden structure on Sixth Street and it burned down. After I left the Knabbs, I worked for Loyce and Jack for awhile and took care of Bobby.

"After I worked for the Knabbs, I went to Richard and Carrie Davis's home where I did everything but the wash. They treated me like family, too. Their children were Violet and Dickie.

"It was about this time that I met my future husband, Frank Crawford, at the local skating rink. We went to the Methodist Church that night to a special musical program and he and his friend drove me out to mama's house afterward. I was 20 years old and he was 23. He was working in Jacksonville as a truck driver with Great Southern Trucking Company. We were married three weeks after we met. Judge Frank Dowling married us October 1, 1939 in Macclenny and we left for Frank's parent's house in Jacksonville, where we lived for the next few years. I worked at the Sherill McClain drug store and restaurant across the street from their Talleyrand Avenue home.

"Then, when the war started, he wanted to join up so he joined the Sea Bees. I returned home and began working in the laundry at Camp Blanding. We had a Chevrolet Roadster car that I finished paying for while Frank was gone.

"When he returned from service, I got pregnant with our first child. Frank Warren, 'Mickey', was born on February 4, 1945, which was my 26th birthday. I was so proud of our child. Frank started working for Roe Barber, riding horses, and then for Pine Top riding the woods. Our next child was Jimmy. Both boys were delivered by Dr. P.A. Brinson. Jimmy was born November 28, 1946, with a hair lip and cleft palate. That's when I learned about Hope Haven and, Lord, they were a God's blessing. He was three months old when they operated on his mouth and when he was one year old they did the cleft palate. I had lots of family support, and I tried to be strong. I've always tried to be strong and have a positive attitude about all the trials I've had in life.

"Our third child was a daughter and I thought she was the prettiest thing I'd ever seen. She was born December 3, 1947, and we named her Carolyn. Our last child, Gwen, arrived on February 7, 1950."

Two years later, in 1952, Josephine's life changed when she made the difficult decision to divorce Frank. Even though it would be hard with four small children, the drinking and womanizing were worse. With her family's support she moved in with her sister, Lizzie, and brother-in-law, Alton, and their family and her mother.

She went to work for the King Edward Cigar Factory in Jacksonville to earn a living for her little children. The \$25 weekly Frank was to give her for child support ended after he paid a few hundred dollars.

One day Josephine was helping her two brothers, Shubert and Tex, at their service station located at the corner of Sixth Street and Macclenny Avenue. She glanced down the street and saw a man getting out of his fully-loaded lumber truck.

"I didn't meet him that first day," she said. "It was later when he would come into the service station to trade with my brothers that we formally met and got to talking with each other."

Guy Arnold was a native of Alabama. He was living at the Hotel Annie, and working for Batchlor Brothers Sawmill when he met Josephine. The couple began dating and were married about a year later in 1954.

"He has been a wonderful husband and equally a wonderful father to my children," she said of her husband of 40 years, who has retired after 36 years in a road construction career. "Nowadays, he helps the county out as an inspector part-time when he isn't helping me change grandchildren's diapers, or attending to any other needs they have. He plays with them and entertains them as much as I do. He helps me cook and clean house and many times prepares our meals all by himself. I couldn't have asked the Lord for a better husband, friend and companion than Guy has been to me."

Her daughter, Carolyn, was killed in an automobile accident on August 22, 1976, in Salt Springs, Florida. Mickey and Jimmy both work in construction work, and daughter Gwen is a talented designer of Indian artifacts, clothing and jewelry.

In her cozy home filled with family relics and photographs from the ceiling to the floor and wall to wall, she spends her time sewing or tending to her yards. She loves for the grandchildren to visit. Mickey has three children, Guy Alfred, Angie Denise and Mickey, Jr. Jimmy has three children, one from his first marriage to Martha Gray, a daughter named Cynthia. He and his second wife, Laverne Barton, have two children, Jimmy Mack, Jr. and Katrina. Gwen's only child is Jody, who has two young sons. Jody and the boys live with Josephine and Guy.

Surrounding her Ohio Street home is an array of lovely plants and flowers. A huge spreading oak drapes itself gracefully in her front yard, surrounded by a massive bed of colorful bromeliads. She and Guy have a vegetable garden and their pantry shelves are filled with attractive jars of the seasonal food they preserve. On any given day she can look down the street and revive memories as she views scenes from the past. Within view, memory lane leads to the place where some of her children were born, where her mother once lived, and where many members of her family reared their children.

"My mama lived until 1966. When she died, I went off by myself and I thought, 'This is something that I always thought I could not take, but I had seen her suffer and couldn't hardly stand that.'

"The way I feel about my mother is to try and honor her by being the same kind of mother to my children that she was to hers. She was a good mother who provided for us and would have given us, or anyone, anything she had. I've tried to be to my children what mama was to me, and I have always loved my children like she did hers. Sometimes I wonder if they know the depth I feel for each of them, because I would do anything in the world for my kids because I love them to death. A mother's love is something that is hard to describe."

There's only one thing she feels she might do differently if she had her life to live over. It's a mistake in judgment she made long before she married the first time, but one made by many in the era of which she speaks.

"It's a part of my life very few know about because I never talk about it. It happened back in the '40's. I dated a boy from Georgia that hauled moonshine. I went with him one night to take a load up to Lake City and the revenueurs were waiting down the road. They shot up the car, but we ran and got away. We hid in the woods and later walked up to Lake City. They caught us and took us to Lake City jail that night. I didn't even have a change of clothes.

"The next day they transported us to Jacksonville, and you won't believe this, but they stopped off in Macclenny at Sands Liquor Store. I was leaning over in the back seat, but everyone that came by knew me. Someone went and told mama. We went before the judge

in Jacksonville and the lawyer told me to plead not guilty and that was all there was to it. That boy gave a friend of mine some money to go and buy me a dress and some shoes to change in. It was so beautiful, I remember it was the prettiest dress you ever did see. It was flowery with a big flair tail.

"I've always been embarrassed it happened and I've just never talked about it, hoping it would go away."

Like all the rest of her memories, it hasn't, and this kindly woman who believes in fairness for all and doing good for others really wouldn't want any of her past to go away. Instead, she will continue to instill faith and courage in her children and their children in hopes they will benefit from their own mistakes and the fumbles of others. She trusts that they will always maintain a positive attitude about making the best of the life they have been privileged to live and of the legacy they have inherited.

Like the majestic oak whose roots run deep in the soil of her front yard and spreads its sturdy protective branches outward over the frame of her snug home, she feels you can meet with triumphs and disasters and still stand tall -- it happened to Dollie Carroll Kirkland Johnson and as Josephine tells her children, it can happen to you.



- 1 Lorayne McCormack Rhoden and her sister Lillian McCormick Dubose. Lorayne left - Lillian right.
- 2 Home of John Decator McCormack and his wife Lillie. Known as John T "Sankie" Groves place located at Manning. Still standing in 1994.
- 3 John McCormack's Tobacco crop on the Grove's Place. Workers Elvin Starling, J.W. Manning, Oscar Hobbs, Leonard Griffis all left to right.
- 4 Left to Right: Mack Burnett, ---Watson, Bernice Manning, Clara Watson, Lillian McCormack, John D. McCormick, Mary Manning Griffis, ---Watson. Gathering tobacco ready for the barn, hired by John McCormick.
- 5 Left: Lillian McCormack Dubose, Right: Lorayne McCormack Rhoden at home in Macclenny 1994.

**Lorayne Rhoden and Sister Lillian DuBose,
daughters of
John D. McCormick and Lillie Deliah (Leigh)
McCormick Macclenny, July 1993**

Lillian McCormick DuBose

Lorayne McCormick Rhoden

What was it like around the late John D. McCormick's home about seven decades ago in Baker County? Well, two of his surviving daughters say it was like, "John, my kids and your kids are fighting our kids." That's because John brought seven children to his November 26, 1923 marriage with Lillie Deliah (Leigh) Thomas, who brought seven children with her. Together they had four children and that made a total of 18 children beneath the McCormick roof.

And that's another story. The two daughters say they could lie in bed and look up through their roof at the stars, or look down through the floor and count the chickens!

Sound extraordinary? Well, it was. Though times were hard, and it was in the depth of the Depression, John D. McCormick never let his family go without food, clothes, or a roof over their heads. The McCormick family was taught Christian principles, spiced with laughter and music in the home with "yours, mine and ours." And today, his two youngest daughters like to remember the past with great fondness.

Humble may have been their circumstances, but Lorayne McCormick Rhoden and Lillian McCormick DuBose roar with spirited laughter at their memories of home.

"The wind blew through the cracks of our home. The children of this day and time would freeze slam to death in it," said Lillian.



John Decator McCormick and his wife Lillie (Leigh) McCormick. She never cut her hair.

"It was during the 'Deflation' years, and our farm was foreclosed on," said Lorayne. "Daddy never did own any more property and we moved around and farmed, but daddy always took good care of us."

"Yeah, he always provided," said Lillian. "He'd find work as a carpenter in the winter or he'd help make syrup. He has cooked syrup all over this county," she said.

"And he could build a fireplace chimney that would blow all the smoke out and throw the best heat around in the home of anyone in the county. He's worked all over the county building chimneys for people," said Lorayne.

"And he built many homes here in the county," remembered Lillian. Today they live next door to one another, each in a house he built.

Lorayne agreed. "I would sit down and work with him after I got in school and learned fractions, and he'd have me figure out the footage he'd want in timber to build a house. Then I'd write it up so he could go to the mill and get the order filled," she continued. "He always managed to figure it out somehow before I got old enough to do it. I don't know how though, because he only had a 3rd grade education, but he did. After I had it figured, I'd always have to add a quarter inch to it to make sure he had enough lumber."

The two women reflect mostly about their lives when they lived in the Manning section of the county, renting the same farm their father lost to the mortgage holder during the Depression.

As the older children moved away, the work load fell on the two youngest girls. Their mother was ill and died while they were in their beginning teens. They remember her beautiful brown hair was down to the floor in the back.

"She never cut her hair except for a few inches to keep it from dragging on the floor," said Lillian.

"I did all the housework, even when mama was with us, because she was not always well," smiled Lorayne. "I learned to cook at an early age. I had to get up at 4 a.m. to cook breakfast and clean up the house, make the beds, and finish my homework before catching the bus at 7 a.m. to go to school."

And where was Lillian while you were doing all the housework?

"I was milking the cows, feeding the horses and mules, the chickens and the pigs," she said, roaring with laughter. "I didn't like the inside work; I preferred working in the fields and tending the animals. Anything that had to do with the outside work."

"I'd go to school during the week, and have to wash and iron on Saturday to get our school clothes and the men's work clothes clean," said Lorayne.

"Sometimes I helped by pumping the water," said Lillian. But usually it was agreed that she was needed in the fields, hoeing cotton or corn.

"I had to use three number-three wash pots filled with water, and lye soap that Mama made, to wash our clothes," said Lorayne. "We used those ole flat irons that had to be heated on the wood cook stove or in the fireplace to iron with," she explained.

"After the clothes were washed we'd take our bath out in the yard in those tubs of soapy water," said Lillian. "We only bathed once a week, otherwise you just sponged off every day. We'd always arrange for our tub to be put back behind the shed or house to bathe, and the boys were very respectful. Daddy saw to that."

"When it was cold weather we moved the tubs inside to the living room or into the kitchen and we'd go in one at a time to bathe, all using the same bath water," said Lorayne. "We had a little pan of clean water for our face."

"We didn't think a thing about it, that's just the way it was back then," said Lillian.

During the Depression the two women remember that they seldom had eggs for breakfast.

"We used them to trade for sugar, coffee, flour and such," they said. "We'd eat our own grits and bacon and have gravy and our own butter from the farm, but we'd trade our eggs."

They remember their first radio experience.

"We'd walk three miles to Jim Starling's house to listen to the Grand Old Opry on a battery-powered radio. My daddy loved to hear Uncle Dave Macon sing," said Lorayne. "We all thought that invention was wonderful."

"We had a graph-a-phone," said Lillian, "and when the spring would get broke we'd turn that thing with our fingers to hear them old 78s."

It was a good life, they say. They seldom were punished but when they were it was with a leather strap. "We didn't get it often, because we were too scared to disobey," Lillian said jovially.

Lorayne quit school in the ninth grade to marry 26-year-old Ollie Johns from Lake Butler. Together, they ran three service stations -- one in Hilliard, another in Lake Butler and one in Macclenny. Ollie also drove a taxi once in Macclenny for U.C. Herndon.

"It didn't stay in business long," said Lorayne.

The couple had five children: Porter, who lives in Waycross, Ga.; John lives in Tampa, Mamie (Mrs. Martin Cole) lives in Macclenny, Butch lives in Glen and Joan lives in Macclenny with her mother. When Ollie died, she married Obie Farris, then Rachie Rhoden who died in 1990.

Lillian, understandably, takes great pride that out of all her parents' children, she was the only one to graduate from high school. She married Charles DuBose, a military man, after graduation and the couple had four children -- Lillie Mae (Mrs. Tommy Christian), who lives in Arizona; Grace (Mrs. Fred Paul Conner) of Glen, Martha (Mrs. Sorin Margean), who lives next door, and J.L., who lives in Lake City. Charles, who was a machinist at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, died in 1979. They have seven grandchildren.

Lorayne says her greatest treasured memory is the time she spent with her parents.

"They taught me the Christian way, the right and wrong of life; it was just everyday talk in our family. Daddy would read the Bible,

along with me when I got old enough to read it. He'd try to explain it to me and of course I didn't always understand it, but it became a part of my life." She belongs to the Faith Baptist Church in Macclenny.

Lillian agrees that their life is a wonderful time to reflect upon.

"I think the kids of this day and time have it too easy. I really do. They have TV, VCR, and radios. If they aren't listening to one of them in the house, they got 'em hung to their ears outside. They've got telephones, and strictly have it too easy and they don't care if anything else is done, or not, except they get to do what they want to do.

"They got cars, go where they want, have money to spend. They aren't developing the character and appreciation of things like we did."

Lorayne agreed. "They're only interested in their selves."

"I know they've got a hard life before 'em if they continue like they're going now because life hasn't changed, the people have. Life's problems are the same and one way or the other they're going to have to face life's problems and deal with them," she noted.

"Today, parents don't have much control over discipline because if you do, the HRS will get you," said Lillian, who belongs to the First Baptist Church in Macclenny.

The two widowed sisters love visiting each other and talking about the "good ole days," and they each put their early training to use. Lillian, an excellent seamstress, loves sewing and is grateful to her mother, who taught her at age eleven.

"I used to ride over to Hilliard, to the chicken farms, and buy the prettiest feed sacks to make my daughter's dresses. Everyone thought they were beautiful. I just love to sew," she said.

Lorayne enjoys crocheting and lap weaving. She makes her friends gifts of her lovely handwork, and makes things especially for her eight grandchildren.

Most of the family have died now, only a few still live, but they visit together and stay close. William Carl and Ola Belle (Burnett), the only two children from John's second marriage to Clarinda (Clark), live in Jacksonville. One half-brother, Ellis McCormick, died recently. He was one of five children from John's first marriage to Lou Vernie Rawl. He became one of the county's first circuit ministers, whose career span was 74 years.

"Daddy was real proud of him," said Lorayne. "He started preaching when he was about 15 years old, standing up in the cotton field. Instead of pickin' cotton he was preaching to the kids and the other workers in the field," she said. "Daddy used to tell Ellis he was preaching more hard-shell than he was Southern Baptist doctrine, so that is why Ellis went over to the hard-shell Baptist." His parents were Southern Baptist.

Other children of this marriage were Mary (Mrs. Ernie Johns), Oscar, Bessie Hilliard Steele, and Vernie.

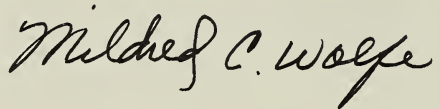
The sisters do not think they'll run out of things to talk about, or to tell their grandchildren. Their laughter and sunny dispositions are on-going, and contagious — that is, if they can just get this younger generation to sit down long enough to listen.

Mildred Wolfe

JULY 1992

"My stepmother made me a dress out of a feed sack. I was so proud of it."

"My sister Hazel sold one of her chickens and sent me a dollar."

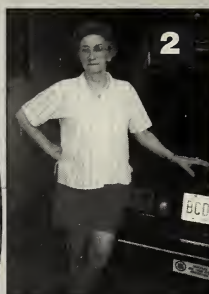
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mildred C. Wolfe". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

When Mildred Wolfe was entering her teens she could easily pick 200 pounds of cotton a day. As she sweltered in the hot Mississippi sun, the little one-room schoolhouse where she should have been studying was in view.

"I was embarrassed to be out there picking cotton when all the other children were in school," she said.

Those were what the petite career nurse calls her slave days. Not the long, all-night vigils caring for the ill and lame. Not the all-night operations that went on in the hospital she would later supervise. No, the "slave days" were those back in Mississippi where she grew up -- hoeing in the dusty fields, plowing with a mule, washing clothes on a crude metal scrub board and ironing them with heavy cast irons. There were days she helped with the butchering of hogs and canning of vegetables and fruits while standing over a sweltering hot cast-iron, wood-burning stove in the heat of summertime.

It all began for Mildred when she was born to Basil and Annie Jane (Crosby) Cooper on November 20, 1916 in Polkville, Mississippi, not far from Jackson. The modest little log cabin that was her humble home was shared with two older sisters, Hazel and Mary. Her parents were hardworking farm people who tilled the soil for a scant living. Times were hard until one day her father hitched up the old mule to the shabby wooden wagon and drove his little family to near-by



- 1 John Wolfe CB-Navy 1942.**
- 2 Mildred Wolfe 1993.**
- 3 Basil Cooper and Children. Rear: Mary Basil and Hozel. Front: Bea and Mildred.**
- 4 Easter Sunday 1985. Robert, wife Bennice daughters, Amanda and Monica.**
- 5 Jim and Kathy Wolfe holding Monica, Robert and Bennice's daughter.**
- 6 Kaleb Wolfe 1990. Eight years old. Son of Robert and Kathy Wolfe.**
- 7 Basi and Annie Cooper (holding baby Mildred). Standing front: Hazel and Mary Cooper.**
- 8 Mildred (Mrs. John) Wolfe 1942. Macclenny, Florida.**
- 9 Mildred Cooper Wofe, Baker County Nurse.**

Pelatchie. Things began to look up some when her father opened a general mercantile store.

"He sent peddlers out in covered buggies," said Mildred, "and I think times were much better because daddy bought a brand new Ford and we took a trip to Texas to visit relatives.

"In those days there were no such things as motels, so at night our little group camped out in tents, but I remember that daddy and the other men would sleep out in the open with their guns right by their head," she said. "You know, in those days it was still the wild west." She doesn't remember being frightened.

Once the group crossed over into Texas she wasn't sure where they visited, but she said, "we went to the ocean to swim and I remember we had a family picture taken that is still in the family."

Then things began to go wrong. Another baby sister was born and her mother -- at the age of 35 -- died, following the birth, from complications of measles and pneumonia. Her grief-stricken father took Mildred, her two older sisters and baby Beatrice to the home of their maternal grandmother, Cecelia Crosby. Here they lived a short time until her father remarried.

"After our mother's death, daddy didn't seem to care for anything anymore. He lost the store, I think from giving too much credit, and returned to farming. Or, he did sawmill work and anything else he could find. We moved around from place to place," she noted. "I remember once I rode in a covered wagon to attend school in a one-room school house on the prairie."

In the 9th grade, Mildred's family moved to Mendenhall. It was during the deep Depression, about the year 1932.

"My stepmother made me a beautiful dress out of a feed sack. I was so proud of it," she said. "We were lucky if we had one pair of shoes in those days."

As Mildred grew up, she and her sisters were given more and more responsibilities.

"We worked hard, real hard. There were no conveniences. We cooked on a wood-burning stove, did without electricity or indoor plumbing and washed on scrub boards and ironed with hand irons heated on the stove.

"We used the ole outdoor privy and my daddy wouldn't use the Sears catalog for toilet paper, he preferred corn cobs. I often wondered why he had hemorrhoids; now, I know."

After graduation from high school, Mildred was sent to care for her stepmother's mother who had twelve children, some of them hard-core, hard-drinking sons.

"They spoiled their mother and I had all the work to do. I was expected to comb her hair for one hour every night, regularly. No matter how tired I was from the day's hard work, I had to comb and brush grandma's hair for one full hour.

"There were hog killings and, oh, how I hated the smell of that fresh meat," she said. "The work was so primitive and hard that to this day I call those days my slave days. We had to wash and clean chittlin's, and anything else that needed doing."

Then something wonderful happened. It changed her life. Her oldest sister, Hazel, had married at age 16, divorced, and was living in Chicago. It was Hazel who made it possible for Mildred to enroll in nursing school.

"My sister Hazel was as poor as poor can be, but she managed to become a beautician. In addition she sold magazines, did house-keeping and just anything to make a dollar so she could send it to me to pay for my tuition, books and uniforms."

And she remembers that her other sister, Mary, sold a chicken once just to send her a dollar. A dollar went a long way in the Depression days, she said.

"Mary also married at 16, and she had started her family, but she supported me and I won't ever forget my sisters for helping me to get out of that situation. Mary and her family were so poor that once when I visited them, they had to borrow money to buy food. I found that out later. But Mary would work at any job to help send me money."

The private nursing school was at Meridian Sanitarium and it was a change for the young girl who had learned at an early age to fend for herself under all kinds of circumstances.

"The director of the school was so hard on us, and mean, that we called him 'Hitler,' she said. "And since I didn't have any money, I

couldn't pay for the cleaning of my uniforms like most of the other girls, so I had to wash and iron my own. The skirts of our uniform were the width of a sheet, and they , like the collars and cuffs, had to be starched stiff and ironed to perfection. It was an exhausting task."

In addition there were no conveniences at the hospital.

"I don't know if the young ones today going into nursing would make it. We were never idle. If we didn't have anything particularly to do, we had to get a rag and go to cleaning. We never stood around, never!

"We had to make our own saline, our own cotton balls, swabs, bandages, and sponges. We had one room we called the cast room where we made casts. Those three years were hard, but we learned discipline and to appreciate what we have."

Mildred said the last six months in the school she was confined to the school grounds as punishment for talking to her boy friend on the phone.

"The day I graduated, I walked off that campus."

After graduation, Mildred took the advice of a supervisor and travelled to Lake City with other graduate nurses to apply for work at the newly-constructed Lake Shore Hospital.

"Those were the happiest days of my life. Everyone was so nice and friendly. They made us feel so appreciated and important. We were not used to that. It was 1940, the Depression was over and I made a huge salary of \$45. a month."

The first thing she did was buy her father a truck.

"Up to this time, daddy only had a horse and wagon, so I sent him the monthly payments for a truck."

Her generosity turned his life around. With transportation, he returned to productive farming and eventually owned his own farm and a nice home.

She went to J.C. Penney's and bought her sister Mary's children about \$50 in Christmas gifts.

Within five months she was promoted to operating supervisor at Lake Shore Hospital.

A few weeks after she arrived in Lake City she met John Wolfe of Macclenny, who was employed as a clerk for the Forestry Service.

John had told his friend's wife, Roberta MacCoskey, also a nurse, to be on the lookout for a nice looking nurse for him to date. Roberta told him about Mildred.

"We had a blind date and I didn't like him at first. He returned the next day and we drove out to Ocean Pond and sat on the pier. I really thought I was blessed to be dating someone who owned his own car. John took me to nice places and we did so many nice things together, things I'd never done before, places I'd never been. I wasn't used to it."

In two weeks John proposed to Mildred, but it took him nine months to convince her to become his wife. It was 1941 and they rented an apartment in Lake City after their wedding. Those were very happy days for the little 'slave girl' until World War II happened and John, with his brother Robert, voluntarily joined the Navy SeaBees while their brother Jesse chose the Army. Like a flash the three brothers left for war.

Mildred worked hard at Lake Shore. The Navy hospital was nearby and she remembers that sometimes the operations would go on all day and all night. Ofttimes she would meet John on rest and relaxation (R&R) for a long week-end. Once she even moved to California for a month to be with him. It was there that Robert's ship also docked and Mildred and John went to meet him.

"Oh, we had the best time. We went out on the town and enjoyed being together so much. It was the last time we ever saw Robert," she reminisced. "His plane was shot down somewhere over the Pacific and his body was never located."

Three years later, when John returned home from the war, he insisted they move to Macclenny.

"At first I was devastated. There was no hospital, no doctor. We lived upstairs over his mother's house at first, then John got a job selling cars for Jesse Frank Morris." Eventually they moved to an upstairs apartment in the Walter Dopson home.

Then Dr. John Watson came to Macclenny. And before long he was asking Mildred to take the place of his lab technician, Harold Bradley, who was leaving. That job lasted for 24 years.

"And I'll never forget that wonderful man, he was a joy to work for," she said.

Dr. Watson died in 1972.

After that Mildred worked at Northeast Florida Mental Hospital for 11 years where she was promoted to supervise five wards after just five months on the job.

The rest is Baker County history. Two wonderful sons graced their family -- Robert, a graduate of the University of West Florida, and Jimmy, a graduate of the University of Florida. Robert lives in Live Oak with wife Bennice (Champion) and Mildred's two precious granddaughters -- Amanda, 15, and Monica, 9. Monica was crowned 'Little Miss Suwannee County' and Mildred is proud of the fact her daughter-in-law's talented hands designed a replica of a \$600. dress for Monica to wear.

Robert, who has a degree as a medical technologist, teaches eighth grade science at Live Oak Middle School.

Jimmy works near Lake City at the Olustee Prison as a parole officer. He and his wife, Kathy (Jones), live in Macclenny and have one son, Kaleb, who is 11 years old. Kathy works at Union Correctional Institution.

Her father lived to be 91 years old. Longevity runs in the family, as her grandfather, James Toliver Cooper, died at the age of 108. Perseverance is also a family trait. Her father, injured as a young man, lost the use of his right hand when a muscle was cut in his youth.

"He had to learn to use his left hand for writing, and he could plow, and hoe and do anything else just as good as someone with both hands," she said with pride. "You'd never know he was handicapped."

Today, she seldom looks back on those days when times were more difficult. She has excelled in her career, having been honored as Nurse of the Year in 1981 at NEFSH. She was elected by the Macclenny Woman's Club in 1991 as Woman of the Year. She presently serves as president of Friends of Wells Nursing Home.

John died in 1977. She often takes time to browse through battered and torn scrapbooks that hold countless letters she and John wrote to one another.

"We wrote 365 days out of the year. We never missed a day writing," she said.

She has managed to find a fulfilling life with family and friends. Her sisters each returned to school for educations and have lucrative and rewarding careers. Their children are all outstanding and accomplished. She takes great pride and feels her parents would be very proud of the way each has turned out in life. As for her personal life, she says:

"I eat what I want, when I want. I love to read, and I watch soap operas. I always thought if I could see all the movies I wanted to see and read all the books I wanted to read, it would be great, and now that I can, I do."

But she is not likely to forget the past although she says much has escaped her memory.

"Today, I thank God everytime I turn on a light or use a washing machine. We are truly a blessed generation to have all these conveniences."

Elva Combs Dinkins

1994

"We did what they wanted us to do, not what we wanted to do, and we found out that was best for us later in life."

Elva C. Dinkins

Elva Combs Dinkins was born on the banks of the Middle Prong of the St. Marys River on May 5, 1908 in northern Baker County. She traveled to Macclenny with her parents in a horse and wagon before the streets were paved and remembers the special beauty of the towering shade trees that lined the lanes. She recalls how she romped and played in the bright sunshine as a cool breeze graced her brow. And she fondly recalls home, where, in an atmosphere of love, she was indulged with kindness and devotion by God-fearing parents.

"I didn't think of it being the good times at the time," she told me in an interview as we sat in the comfort of her Sixth Street home where she has lived for the past 52 years, 34 of them as a widow. "I thought at the time we were having the worst time in the world," she said with a sigh.

Her parents, James Jackson "Boss" Combs and mother, Martha Dowling, dealt with the times in which they lived in a remarkable way, remembers their youngest daughter. They were the parents of 14 children, rearing the 12 that lived and one grandchild on their 300-acre farm in north Baker County.

"My oldest sister, Belva Elizabeth, died in childbirth three weeks before mama gave birth to me," said Elva. "And mama raised her baby right along with me. We were like twins, sometimes I think we were closer than twins," she said of her niece, also named Belva Elizabeth.

Their rambling country home was built by Elva's grandfather, Jim Combs. Later, Elva's "papa" added a kitchen set apart from the

main house, yet connected by the large front porch that adorned the front of their home. Martha Combs had a wood-burning cook stove where she prepared her family's meals, but when company came, and bigger pots were required, she made a fire in the fireplace and simmered large containers of greens, beans, peas -- or whatever she grew in the garden -- along with a huge pot of chicken pileau.

"Mama went to the garden daily to get food for our table, then she'd come home, prepare and cook it for us," she said. "After dinner, I remember that daddy would always stretch out on one of the two large church-type benches on our front porch and tell us younger girls, who he always called his 'dolls', to fan him," she said. "And oh, how we enjoyed doing it for him."

Martha Combs raised chickens and turkeys to sell. The money afforded shoes and clothing for her children. She would load her wagon with the fowl, drive as far as Marietta, spend the night with her sister; then, with either her husband or one of her sons, drive the horse and wagon all the way to Jacksonville to sell her stock.

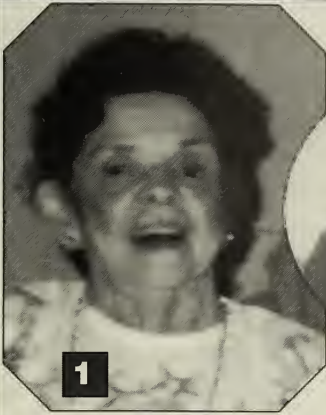
"Mama would buy whole bolts of material. She could look at the picture of a dress in a catalog and make me and my sisters and Belva dresses that looked just like the pictures," remembered Elva. "Even our neighbors would ask mama to sew like that for them," she said proudly.

"We had lots of cows, and always plenty of milk to drink," she remembers. "As we grew older, Belva and I had to help with chores. I remember sweeping our yards every Saturday with the broom brush and, if mama washed clothes during the week, then we had to iron them with the heavy cast irons we heated in the fireplace on Saturdays as well. If mama didn't get to wash during the week, then we had to help with that, too," she said.

When her mother washed clothes it was done in handcrafted logs called troughs. One was used for washing, one rinsing. The sugar boiler was used for boiling the dirt out of the clothes, she said. And the sugar boiler was used for Saturday night baths.

"We'd build a small fire beneath it, just enough to warm the water, and on Saturdays we all got a good bath," she remembered.

Her parents were Primitive Baptist and in those days attended the once-a-month meetings with eagerness.



**1 Belva Phillips Saunders
1994**

**2 Elva and Robert (Dunk)
Dinkins**

**3 Elva Dinkins as small
child**

4 Elva Dinkins 1995

**5 Robert "Dunk" Dinkins
cal 1925**

“Mama and Daddy would bring home up to 25 people sometimes to eat and spend the night because they’d come a long way, usually by horse and wagon. The all-day meetings often lasted into the night,” she said. “Mama would fix beds on the floor for the children. Our house would be full of people.”

It was at one of those Primitive Baptist meetings that Elva met handsome ‘Dunk’ Dinkins, ten years her senior. She was sitting in the car with a good friend, Nora Mae Dowling, when he walked up. He was, she remembered, a neat dresser, and very nice. They courted for two years, then on July 2, 1925, the couple married at the home of her parents, who had moved north of Glen to a much smaller farm by this time.

Belonia Robert Dinkins the III was nicknamed “Dunk.” He was working in Miami during the land boom when he married 17-year-old Elva. He was 27, had his own car, and had learned to do a variety of things to make a good living. After two years the couple moved back home to Baker County. For a while Dunk farmed, then dipped cattle, before moving to Macclenny in 1932 and running a “filling” station. Some of their young friends in the community were Myrtie and Verge Walker, Edna and Hardy Harris and Ira and Eva Walker.

“There wasn’t much to do during those days but go to church, and most of us, especially us ladies, were churchgoers,” she said.

Elva was kept busy tending to the couple’s four children: Verna, Lois Lorraine, Robert and Linda. They were actively involved in school and community activities. Dunk acquired the Ford Dealership which he operated for 25 years, until his death from a heart attack in 1959 at the age of 61.

Elva, with an 8th-grade education, was fortunate to obtain work at Northeast Florida Mental Hospital where she was employed for 10 years. At the age of 61 she returned to school to acquire a GED degree, equivalent of a high school diploma. Inspired by what she was learning, she continued her education by enrolling in Lake City Community College where she accumulated 55 credit hours.

“I might have finished the whole four years but at the time I would have had to drive to Gainesville,” she said, explaining that was before Jacksonville instituted a four-year college.

Today, only Elva and one sister, Lois, are the surviving siblings of 'Boss' and Martha Combs. Gone are Belva Elizabeth, Mattie, Ethel, Sarah, Eddie, Joel, Virgil, Ernest, Forrest and Glen. Roy died as an infant, as did another little son.

Her niece, Belva Elizabeth lives in Miami Springs. She is 85 years old, the same as Elva. They often talk on the phone for an hour together, reminiscing about the "good ole days."

"We talked just last week," said Elva. "We like to relive the memories we share like the one we especially remember that happened on a bright sunshining morning when a fresh wind swept across our faces as we ran down the lane that ran in front of mama and daddy's house. We could see Papa across the windswept fields plowing, and Lois and Virgil pulling weeds in the corn and peanuts. Me and Belva were little, but we decided to help, so we climbed the fence and jumped over in the field where we saw these tall weeds growing right in the same rows that Virgil and Lois were weeding. Belva took one row and me another and we pulled up a third of two rows before we hollered at papa to "look at us" helping to pull weeds. We saw papa stop . . . and look . . . and then he started running toward us. We could see he was mad. We didn't know what for, though, so we started running. I made it over the fence before papa caught up with us, but he caught Belva and swatted her. I was running as fast as my long legs would take me, thinking "I've just got to find mama, she won't let him whip me." I saw mama standing on a fence rail throwing some swill to the hogs, but papa caught me before I reached her. He tapped me, I think it was the first time he ever had, and it hurt my feelings lots more than it hurt me. We had pulled up his corn, thinking it was weeds," she laughed.

She loves to remember those good old days, times when her parents were strict, but also loving and kind.

"We did what they wanted us to do, not what we wanted to do," she said. "And that was good for us, we found out later in life."

What does she enjoy most? Well, of course, her children and grandchildren, although none of them lives in Baker County. Her walls are filled with their pictures, though. Across the street from her home is where her heart dwells. It's the Church of God where she has held membership for 67 years.

"I joined the church when I got saved, and honey, that's the best feeling in the world. I'll never forget the peace I felt, it's a feeling you'll never forget," she said with conviction.

And neither are those feelings of yesteryear something she'll likely be able to forget, she said, as she reflects back on the family she remembers growing up with and the home they each filled with their love.

Nellie Hart (Day-Farris)

JULY 1994 Macclenny

"Some of the men in town wore guns, and the bad ones would shoot it up. Some men would play poker all night and sometimes into the next day."

Nellie H. Farris

You can scarcely see it from the main road, the quaint little cottage covered by vines and blooming hibiscus trees. Friends who regularly visit Nellie Day Farris turn left off Highway 90 just east of town and circle the vine-covered hoop in front of her house to enter the labyrinth of colorful florals and reflecting ponds. Plants of every color and description flourish from her green thumb and playful chirping birds and rambunctious squirrels delight in the outdoor splendor. It's a thicket wonderland where the spritely 83-year-old lady works diligently every day to maintain her picturesque compound. And she loves it.

Nellie was born about 20 miles from Detroit, in Mount Clemens, Michigan, on May 21, 1911. She arrived in Macclenny two years later by train with her parents, Allen and Linda Hart.

Cattle gaps crossed the dusty unpaved Highway 90 at the east and west entrance to town when Nellie's parents built their home on the high pitch of Trail Ridge, an area she would always call home.

Her father had been a chef in the north and after contracting pneumonia and pleurisy -- caused from entering a cold refrigerator for food, then trotting into a hot kitchen -- was admonished by his physician to seek a warmer climate. The couple and their daughter travelled by train to Jacksonville, where a family friend working in real estate recommended that they live in Macclenny.

In 1913, Nellie was joined by a brother, Roy, and when the two began school they used a horse as their mode of transportation. Instead of a saddle, the children used a riding blanket, and trotted the three-and-a-half miles into town together. They left the horse grazing in a friend's field while they attended school.

"There were very few homes in Macclenny back then and those I remember were built of wood. I don't remember block homes at all," she said, reminiscing about the turn-of-the-century days. "Most of the citizens had a vegetable garden and a chicken house. Cows roamed all over the area, and most people were still using a horse and wagon for transportation. None of the streets were paved and they got mighty messy and muddy when it rained.

"I remember that Mattie Hodges had a dress shop on Main Street in the block where the Chamber of Commerce is now located, and the lovely home of Mae Powers was located on the busy corner of Main Street and Fifth, at the red light. Mae had a picket fence to protect all of her beautiful flowers. Her porch was inviting with a wood-slatted swing at one end and a long row of wooden rocking chairs. She was a downtown legend."

Nellie said she often traveled on the train with her mother to Jacksonville to shop.

"We'd catch the train to Jacksonville at Maddox where the viaduct is located. Macclenny didn't have a depot at the time. The only thing at Maddox was a couple of buildings for the railroad hands and a section foreman. We'd leave our horse with the section foreman until we returned," she noted.

When Nellie and Roy were older, they rode their bicycles to school and at one time the school board made arrangements for the Greyhound bus to stop in front of their Trail Ridge home and pick them up. In the afternoons the two would ride home in the car with their father.

Nellie prided herself as Roy's big sister and protector.

"I punched that big old Eulie Dugger one day when he was aggravating us while walking to school," she said, with obvious pride. "That sucker was twice as big as me, but he never messed with us again," she roared with laughter.

In school Nellie was a star basketball player, and about her performance on the track team, she says, "There wasn't a rabbit in the country that could beat me."

A school cafeteria was unheard of in the early years when Nellie and Roy attended school and their lunches had to be brought from home. A 'soup kitchen' was later available at the school, primarily for the undernourished children who often had nothing to eat from home.

She remembers her first teacher was Miss Rosa Wolfe, her first principal as B.J. Padgett and one of her first boyfriends was Lonnie Jones. She graduated from Macclenny High in 1931 with classmates Marie Rowe (Burnsed), Marguerite Mathis Dugger, Edwin Fraser, Ruth Frank Turgeon, Mildred Fraser (Green), Roy Hart, Rudolph Brown Loadholtz and Audrey Thompson Pendley.

"There wasn't alot for us to do for recreation in those days," she said. "Television wasn't invented and we had no phones, radios or electricity."

She saw her first movie projected on the wall of a building in downtown Macclenny.

"I think we paid a dime or something like that to see it," she said, explaining that enterprising folk travelling through town on occasion would show the movies for one night. "They were mostly western-type movies," she said. "We enjoyed them even if the quality was poor and we had to sit on the ground." Later, she said, the Chessman Theater was built in downtown Macclenny.

She doesn't remember the town having a newspaper in her early years. The Press arrived in the late '20s. "We heard about things just by word of mouth," she quipped.

"Some of the men in town wore guns and the bad ones would shoot it up. Some men would play poker all night and sometimes into the next day," she said. "They often had hard feelings when they'd lose big money."

In the '30s, she began to see development and growth within the county.

"In the late '20s, they paved highway 90, and that was a great day for all of us when that opened up. After they built it, they covered it with dirt for one year to help seal it. We were a happy bunch of peo-

ple when they scraped that dirt off with a bull dozer and it was ready for traffic," she said.

She remembers a terrible train wreck at Maddox east of town near the rise of the ridge. "I have photos of the wreckage in an album because mama was a great picture taker," she said.

"The train's water boy threw cold water on that hot engine and blew up the train," she said. "Twenty to thirty cars were derailed and it killed two train engineers."

She remembers her parents being strict, but very loving and caring. "Our mother never laid so much as her little finger on us, and daddy only did once," she said. "Of course, we were obedient children and never questioned their authority. We understood and believed they knew what was best for us. We were very proud of our parents, especially our mother. She was an accomplished artist, having studied under a man who had a studio in Paris, so she received the same train-



- 1 Allen Hart, father of Nellie Hart Ferris. Painted by her mother Linda Hart. 1910.**
- 2 A 1910 self portrait of Lidna Hart, wife of Allen Hart, residents of Trail Ridge east of Macclenny. Mother of Nellie Hart Farris.**



Linda Hart painting her husband in 1910. Parents of Nellie Hart Farris.



Nellie Hart-Day-Farris in her Trail Ridge Home Wonderland.



Family of Nellie Hart Farris



Back Row: Gerald Farris with wife Suki, Glen Hart, Gail Hart, Robert 'Bobby' Hart, Jr., Jason Hart, Glen's son, Yvonne Hart, Robert Hart, Brenda Swisher, Robert's daughter.

Front Row: Jennifer Hart, wife of Hershall (not pictured Gladys Hart, Glen's wife, NELLIE, Dustin Hart Bobby's son, Adam Swisher, and Jonathan Hart, son of Bobby.

ing that she would have received abroad. When mother graduated from his studio, he asked her to join his staff. I think he felt by mother like the daughter he never had. She never worked for him, but she was so accomplished at her talent that she painted a large portrait of herself by sitting in front of a mirror.”

Nellie vividly remembers one day when two men and a woman drove up to her parent’s home and inquired about their next-door neighbors by the last name of Rich.

“We saw a for sale sign in their yard, but no one answers the door,” the threesome said.

“Well, I’ll go up to the house with you,” Nellie said she told them and explained that Mrs. Rich was often shy. She and her mother had noticed a light on very late in the Rich home the preceding night, but had not noticed the couple outside that day.

“I’ll go over with you and call out to her so she’ll know it’s ok,” Nellie assured them.

After calling out to her mother where she was going, she rode with the three to the Rich home which was in sight of her own home. When no one answered the front door, Nellie went to the rear of the house. Finding the door ajar, she peered in and was aghast. She found the Rich couple slain.

“They had been killed with a hatchet, and blood was everywhere,” she said.

The authorities were alerted and an observant Macclenny businessman, Rudolph Powers, reported that he had noticed two men in town the preceding day with Mr. Rich. Sheriff Joe Jones and Mr. Powers immediately drove to Jacksonville and rode around on Davis Street where Mr. Rich’s Pressing Club business was located. Their alertness paid off when they observed the murder suspects in the vicinity. The two were later electrocuted for their crime. It was later learned that Mr. Rich had hired the two men to drive him to Baker County overnight because of his bad eyesight, and the two men conspired to rob the couple after observing them in their home. The robbery netted them four dollars.

The trauma caused by discovering the Rich couple murdered in their home created nightmares for Nellie for a long time.

"I had to go to court and testify about what I saw. That scared me, too. I was really in shock and back then people didn't know how to treat shock like they do today," she said.

Nellie was by nature a zealous and independent spirit and when the need arose she competently assumed responsibilities.

In 1924, fourteen years after Roy's birth, another brother named Gail joined the family. Four years later, when her mother died at the early age of 41, Nellie took over his care.

"Daddy didn't want Gail raised alone. He was so lonesome on the Ridge after mother died, so we went to Jacksonville to the Children's Home of Florida and asked about adopting a little boy Gail's age. They didn't have a boy in Jacksonville, so daddy contacted the home's worthy matron in Winter Haven. She called him back and said she had a little boy she'd really love to place."

The little tyke was sent to Jacksonville and Nellie and her father drove in to meet him.

"This little child came out looking at his feet, never looked at us, and dad said, 'Would you like to live on a little farm where there's lots of cattle, and pigs and chickens and things?'

"He nodded his head, and dad said, 'Well do you think you'll be happy?'

"He said, 'uh huh,' so dad said, 'Go get his clothes', and that's the first time I saw any emotion on that child's face," she said. "It was obvious he wanted to come home with us. His name was Robert.

"He was pale and looked unhappy. He was lost and anything else you could say, but he was as sweet as he could be and he's made a wonderful addition to our family."

It's obvious Nellie holds her adopted brother in high esteem and shows no favoritism between him and her biological brothers.

"When he first came to us I could tell his diet had not been proper and we always had a big garden and I'd have four or five vegetables each meal," she said. "I'd tell him to taste them even if he didn't eat all of what was on his plate, and he'd grow up to be strong like Roy. He idolized Roy, so he started eating and in no time he was eating more than us and became as robust and healthy as Gail and Roy."

The little boy proved to be ingenious, she said. "The boys had a little army camp in the back yard, and Robert would make these little round wheels for his trucks. He was clever," she said, smiling.

When the boys reached teen age, Nellie commuted to Jacksonville daily and obtained work with the City Recreation Department in charge of physical activities in Brentwood Park.

Classmate Mildred Fraser introduced her one day to the Suwannee Store Manager, Cecil Day. The two dated for seven years before marrying.

"We both had family obligations," she explained. "Cecil had his mother and I had my boys and dad."

One day they drove to Bronson, Florida, and as she tells it, "we dug us up a preacher, I think he was the county judge, and he got someone to witness for us and we married."

The two drove to Chiefland and encountered a terrible rain storm. "The total swamp was covered with water and we couldn't tell if we were in the ditch or road and my wedding dress was all muddy and his suit as well. It was a mess," she lamented.

"Cecil's health was not good, but we had a good life. We lived in a little bungalow north of town on highway 228 and had a garden and chickens and goats and a cow. We sold lots of goat's milk, especially to people with ulcers; it's good for that, you know."

Tate Powell, the Baker County Press editor was her best customer, she said.

The couple bottled the milk and sealed it with sturdy paper caps. Customers brought the bottles back for refills.

"My cottage was a dream house with our huge bed of poppies down the fence line and pansies along the walkway. People always admired my blooming flowers year 'round," she said.

Nellie worked with Cecil in the Suwannee store, located on Main Street where the Wells Insurance Agency was once located and across from the famous Hotel Annie. Her jack-of-all-trades father constructed the building and installed the plumbing.

"He was a self educated man. He studied out of books and learned how to do all he did," she said proudly.

Nellie's grandfather Ellery Appleton was a civil engineer who had previously come down from the north to lay out the railroad that runs through Macclenny and all the way to Pensacola. Her grandmother, Lillian Appleton, visited them in Macclenny on many occasions.

"When her sons, Les and Charlie, went into the service during WW I, she lived in a house next door to us until they returned home. Then they returned to Michigan," said Nellie.

During the Christmas season the talented Nellie was known to always have an all- blue-light Christmas tree in the Suwannee store window. Her love for flowers prompted her to open a small florist shop in Lewis Covin's Five and Dime on Main Street.

The couple eventually bought a 50-acre farm south of Macclenny, near Blair's nursery, and hired sharecroppers to work for them.

"We grew the best vegetables," she said. "Cecil was a good farmer because he had been raised on 500 acres in Alachua County. When our corn was planted, it was spaced far apart and then in July we'd fertilize the middle row between the corn and plant our fall greens. The tall corn would shade the greens from the hot sun and along about September, before anyone else had a chance, we'd have the best turnip greens this high," she said measuring a considerable distance from the ground. "We had watermelons with the most gorgeous flavor; we never used chemicals on them, just natural fertilizer. Our cattle was Cecil's pride and glory."

Seven years after their marriage, Cecil died from a heart attack. It was an inherited condition suffered also by his father and brother who, like Cecil at age 41, died too early in life. The couple had no children.

After Cecil died, Nellie moved to Jacksonville and went to work as manager of Samples Shoe Store on Main Street in Jacksonville and later the J.C. Penney Company. She returned home on week-ends and cleaned house for her father and "the boys."

Eventually she met Obie Lee Farris from Geneva, Alabama. He was living at the Hotel Annie and at the time was recovering from an accident.

"He was okay, I guess, but our marriage didn't work out," she said. "Something good did come from it," she noted, "and that was his five sons I inherited."

About this same time, Nellie went to work for the Riverside Presbyterian Church as housekeeper/hostess.

"I was there for a long time, most of the time I was married to Farris. It was my job to buy the food and see that it was cooked properly and served on time. I attended to the church socials, family night, and made sure the building was always clean and ready for the events. There were about 300 people to feed on family night. I had to decorate for the weddings. I also kept the palms around the building pruned," she said.

About three years after Cecil's death, Nellie's father built her the home where she now lives. She purchased the 10-acre site for the \$14.87 state taxes owed.

"My brothers, Gail and Robert, had gone into the service after I married the first time. They had returned to Baker County and then helped me and daddy build the house," she said.

Nellie said she drew the house plans. She and her dad cut the trees down on the property and had Jim Rowe, who owned a saw mill south of town, saw them into lumber on halves.

"It was two thirds what I needed to build my house in 1941," she said.

Over the years Nellie added a maze of shrubs and three fish ponds to the property. One afternoon the family gathered and caught more than 220 fish from one of the lily-laden ponds. The fish averaged two-thirds of a pound each.

Her dad lived with her until his death in 1959.

When the WPA built the Macclenny community center, Nellie became the first activities director. Later, she became the first librarian for the county. In 1962, she went to work for the North East Florida State Hospital and worked in Occupational and Recreational activities until her retirement in 1977.

"About five years before I retired, I had a chance through the Baker County School Board to work at North East State Hospital in the green house and agriculture. That job gave me my future income because I couldn't maintain my home without that," she said. She retired in 1983.

Nellie sells her many plants; some, she says, are rare wonders.

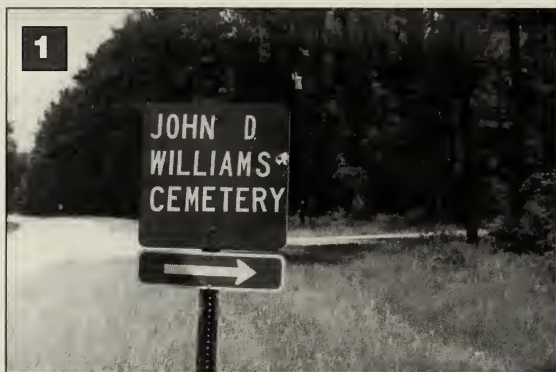
"It's things that are unusual and hard to get," she said, "like Grannie Gray Beards, Mahaws, and White Wisteria."

Today, she takes long walks in the quiet of the morning and again when the sun is settling in the western sky. Hybrid perch and channel cats swim freely in the pond amid the colorful array of dainty water lilies. Off in the distance, not too far away, live her family and they come home to visit often. Those are the sounds she cherishes most. Billy Farris lives nearby on part of the property. Harland, oldest of the Farris boys, lives in Graceville, Gerald in Port Charlotte, Don in Hartford, Alabama, and Hershel in near-by Taylor.

Roy Hart married Mary Brownfield from Ohio and the couple became the parents of four children -- Linda, named for her grandmother, and Janice, Glen and Nancy. Robert, who lives in Macclenny, married Yvonne Hicks and they have three children -- Bobby, Brenda and Becky. Gail married Leona Maddox and the couple has four children -- Donna Gail, Jonell, Butch, Allen and Rhonda.

"Several years ago, Robert got a letter from his brother who had also been adopted," said Nellie. "I took him the letter after the home contacted me. Robert looked at it and didn't say much. His brother, whose last name was Pigg, lived in Tampa and wanted to be reunited with him. Robert drove over there and met him, but didn't even spend the night. He wanted to hurry back home. I think he and his brother correspond occasionally, but Robert said we were his family," she said, smiling.

Each spring Nellie throws a big birthday party for herself. Friends and family gather at her multifarious hacienda and enjoy sharing good food, old times, old tales, and fellowship with their long-time friend. As each year grows more precious, they pay tribute to a life that has lived before their time, a part of their history that can now only be found in the depth of history books.

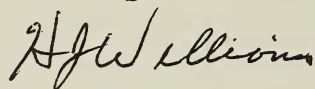


- 1 The way to the Williams Family Cemetery CR 229 and East Tower Road 202. Lone grave of Forebear Jocham Williams.**
- 2 Lone gravesite of Jocham Williams. Descendants gather annually and camp overnight to pay homage to their pioneer ancestor.**
- 3 Horace Williams 1931, son of Sidney and Eva.**
- 4 First cousins, left Lewis Davis, son of Rosa Williams, and HoraCe "Curley" Williams, son of Sidney Williams, replacing fence that surrounds the lone grave of the Williams family forebear, Jocham Williams. Grave located near the banks of the St. Mary's River off of County Forest Road 202.**
- 5 Sidney and Eva (Sauls) Williams, Dec. 6, 1959. 50th Wedding Anniversary. Married Dec. 6, 1909.**

Williams Family

AUGUST 1994

"Stay all night, stay a little longer, dance a little more when your legs are stronger, pull off your coat and throw it in the corner, don't see why you can't stay a little longer."

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. Williams". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter "H" being particularly large and stylized.

It's difficult to say just when the illustrious Williams family entered the backwoods of Baker County and settled in the Taylor section along the banks of the Little St. Mary's River. However, many aspects of their history exist, detailing how this family contributed to the growth of our country, state and county. Today, in 1995, thousands of descendants faithfully hold an annual reunion each April in honor of their forerunners, and meet to honor and express gratitude to those in the family who have passed down a recorded treasure of priceless sketches of their ancestors' history.

According to family research penned in the historical accounts of family member J.E. "Eddie" Kelly in *The Williamses of Baker County*, Jocham Williams was born about 1814 in Bryant County, Georgia, near Penbroke. Kelly said Jocham, whose given name is John Daniel, settled along the north prong of the little St. Mary's River with his parents, William and Sarah Williams, at an early age.

The Williams family and their thousands of collateral lines can be forever indebted to the late Folks Huxford of Homerville, Georgia, for gathering up and publishing much of the family genealogy and lineage. Researchers of the Baker County Williams clan can consult Huxford's Volumes IV and VII to trace the first-known clan member, William Williams, and his son, Samuel, born 1759 in Dublin County, N.C..

Samuel owned 250 acres of land there with a water-mill. Samuel's widow, Deliah Nevill, drew land as the widow of the

Revolutionary soldier in the 1827 land lottery because Samuel was an ensign in the Effingham County, Georgia, militia from 1793–96.

From Samuel and “Dilly’s” union, nine children were born. Their fourth child, William, was said to have been born in 1790 in South Carolina while his parents were en route to Georgia. He married Sarah Harvey on March 4, 1813 and moved from Bulloch County, Georgia, to Columbia County, Florida. His older brother, John F., who married Sarah Stanford on August 10, 1813, moved with them.

William was a captain in the Indian War in 1839. He and Sarah -- born in 1796 in Bryant County, Georgia, the daughter of Richard Harvey, a Revolutionary soldier -- had at least eight known children. When William moved his family to what was then Columbia County in 1832, he settled in the portion cut off into New River, later changed to Baker County. Another, besides his brother John, who moved with him from Bulloch and Bryan Counties, Georgia, was his wife’s brother, John Harvey. William served several enlistments in the Florida militia. He was also Justice of Peace in Columbia County in the 1840s before his homestead land was cut into Baker. He died at his Baker County home about 1860, followed in a few years by his wife, Sarah.

Their first son, John Daniel, known to everyone as Jocham, first married Rebecca (Becky), daughter of Abner W. and Rebecca Sweat Harvey. They were the parents of twelve known children. Jocham’s second wife was Georgia Ann, widow of Malachi Anderson, and together they were the parents of nine known children, all identified with personal sketches in Kelly’s *The Williamses of Baker County*.

Today, when one rides out north of Sanderson on CR 229 approximately ten miles to East Tower Forest Road 202, a prominent sign with an arrow to the right announces the Williams Family Cemetery. Turning right onto 202, one travels about a mile and a half to Forest Road 204 that intersects with 202 from the right. Just to the left is a car trail that leads one to the tranquil banks of the Little St. Mary’s River and to the secluded spot of land the pioneering Williams’ family once called home. Nearby is the lone resting place of Jocham, said to be, at his request, near his favorite fishing hole. A Confederate flag ripples slightly as a delicate breeze touches it in the hot August sun. It expresses dignity and lends vivid color against the lone grave

nestled in the somber cemetery inclosure, and casts its honorable glory in dancing shadows on Jocham's modest grave. This place is hallowed and sacred to a proud Williams clan.

Before the Williams family, there were primitive Indian tribes that inhabited the area by the white sandy shoreline of this serene and peaceful river. Their consecrated burial mound is prominently visible today, only a few feet away from the tranquil river's south bank. A modern sign, erected by the United States Government, states: "Enjoy, but do not destroy your American Heritage". The sign clearly notes that if you dig on this spot you will be fined \$2,000. The site is now listed on the national register of historical places and is protected by the U.S. Government.

The mound was once plowed over by the pioneering Williams family, who reported large bones that churned up in the plow's wake. Today the mound is still recognizable and still covers the remains of centuries-old American natives who once established their homes and reared their families along the banks of this enchanting river which served as nature's highway in a primitive era. Stately old spreading oaks, rustling in the breeze and casting ghostly images between tall towering pines, and the river's swift churning cool tea-colored water seem to whisper, "If I could talk, I'd tell you all, for you would then know the past legacy of this forsaken and desolate land that once held the proud traditions of people who lived and died here with their stories."

Just why the Williams family selected this particular spot of ground to homestead is a question to be pondered. They found neighbors already in this northern end settled around the tiny village which now bears the title of prominent settlers named Taylor. Far to the east and south was another settlement named Darbyville, later changed to Macclenny. The bustling settlement of Sanderson to their south was the hub of Baker County business and eventually designated as the county seat until the court house burned and it was moved to Macclenny. Olustee would become renowned for Florida's only Civil War Battle, one Jocham and other family members would participate in and shed their blood.

Upon the Williams' arrival, the heavily-wooded land had to be cleared for plowing crops, as food was their top priority. It was a stren-

uous job that built men's muscles to extraordinary strength. If they were prominent enough, they owned and used ox and mule teams. If they were fortunate, neighbors would join them in a log rolling. Anything was appreciated to help clear the land for planting, which meant survival. Trees were cut down and prepared by peeling, drying and seasoning into sturdy logs for their first crude homes. If time permitted, good neighbors came to assist in a home-raising, helping to build new homes or barns when needed.

Most dwellings during this era had large open fireplaces at the base of a clay chimney large enough to hold a long log or stump for warming throughout the night in fiercely wintry seasons. Fireplaces were also used to cook meals in until wood stoves could be purchased. Families gathered around them to talk, and bond, and to keep warm.

Nights were tranquil and quiet with only the sounds of the singing male crickets and croaking river frogs lulling the family to a peaceful and restful sleep. In the far distance, one could often hear the cries of panthers and wildcats wooing in the moonlight. Candles lit the scantily furnished homes, or perhaps, if the family was lucky, they owned a kerosene lamp. The occupants were quickly alerted to any sign of someone coming down the road or approaching the house by a barking dog or grunting hogs.

When the family awoke each morning, it was usually to the far-off sounds of cock-a- doodle-doo from the ever-present barnyard roosters. Soon the fragrant smell of freshly ground coffee, the aroma of crisp fried bacon, country ham or homemade sausage being fried to go with hen-house fresh farm eggs and hominy grits filled the air. Off in the distance one could often hear the hew and haws of other farmers getting started with their mules and oxen in the fields for the day's work. Familiar daily sounds on the farm were the mooing of cows being milked at day break and the laying hens cackling proudly.

About noontime, the echo of bugle horns or conch shells, or a tower bell fastened to a limb of a tree, could be heard summoning workers home from their field of labor to a big lunch of freshly-cooked vegetables seasoned with fat-back and large slices of home- smoked ham. Then they would usually "rest a spell," sprawled lazily on the front or back porch, before returning to the hot sweltering turf.

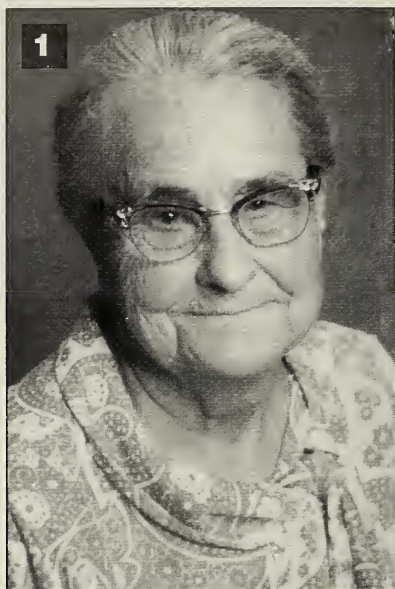
Smaller children would draw cool water from the well and take to the fields where those working would declare as they drank from the old gourd ladle used for a dipper that "it was the best and most refreshing water in the world."

After chores at night, the children would sit around the fire-place in winter, or on the front porch in summer, with their parents and savor thrilling stories. The kind the girls liked best started off with "Once upon a time" and ended up with "Thus, they got married and lived happily ever after." And, of course, there was always the famous hunting story that left the little boys in the family electrified.

Ofttimes on week-ends, fiddles were brought out and farm families would gather at one another's homes to dance and sing. "Grab your partner and promenade," said the square dance caller and soon the strains of everyone chanting "You get a line and I'll get a pole, Honey, you get a line and I'll get a pole, Baby. You get a line and I'll get a pole and we will make them mud cats roll...Honey, babe, O Baby mine." And always there were the strains of "Turkey in the Straw" and "Li'l Liza Jane." Sometimes, the young man would take his partner 'round to the back of the house, near the watershelf, for a private romance chat or courtship where many a proposal has been made or a kiss stolen.

Descendants of the Williams family remember that those were the days of Lila, Annie and Pearl Taylor, Sophie, Emmie and Nova Dowling, the Rhoden girls, Minnie, Maude, Edna and Ola Williams, Minnie Kelly, Verdie, Lizzie and Hattie Dowling, Pattie Crews, Curtis, Lascham, and Auzzie Dowling, Sylvester Taylor, and the Crews bothers. After the party was over, it is said one could hear for miles as the horses galloped away down the road and the wagons rattled over the hills as families returned home while the moon went down behind the tall pines.

The swimming hole, also called wash hole, was where families sometimes bathed, unless it was in big tubs they filled with water from the well or pump. Children splashed happily in the river's refreshing water dashing carefree and gay between gleaming white encroaching sandbars. Most men chewed tobacco and women "dipped" Three Thistles, Sweet Scotch or Railroad Mills snuff with the greatest of pleasure.



1 Eva Sauls Williams - Age 78.

2 Pickin' Cotton ca 1943

L-R: Bryan, Elizabeth (Harold barely seen in middle with parents Eva and Sidney Williams.

3 First cousins, Horace Williams to left, son of Sidney, and Lewis Davis, son of Rosa Williams, and their Uncle Lee Ernest Williams son of General Jackson Williams whose father was Jocham Williams, the Clan forebear.

4 Old fence surrounding the grave of Jocham Williams has grown completely through a tree on the site. New fence has been installed.

5. Horace Williams, son of Sidney Williams at the historical Indian Mound site where his father once plowed and planted corn.



At the age of 87, Lee Ernest Williams is one of the few descendants in 1994 who is alive to talk about the Williams family legacy with any degree of personal experience. Presently living in the Wells Nursing Facility in north Macclenny, the son of General Jackson Williams, oldest son of Jocham, admits he has forgotten much of those days of long ago. Born November 10, 1906, he never met his famous grandfather Jocham, who died in 1896.

"My father, General Jackson Williams, was about half-Indian, and he looked it too," he said. "He stood about 5 feet 10 inches, and was a man of dark complexion and dark black hair."

Ernest was born on the old Bank Place about 12 miles north of Sanderson. His mother, pretty and dark-haired, was a big woman -- "stout and tall," said Ernest. She and General were the parents of 12 children, and Ernest and his sister, Lou Vernie, were the couple's only set of twins. They arrived in the family's two-room farm home along with Sidney Samuel, Hardy, Eddie, Alvia, Linnie, Alta, Martha, Rosa, and Maidie. An infant son, William, died earlier.

"I remember I used to follow behind my daddy and say, 'Daddy, I want a chew of tobacco. Everywhere I'd go, I'd follow behind him saying that, and once in a while he'd give me a piece, but I don't use that stuff now," he said.

When he was about 14 years old, his father obtained work in Miami and the family moved there and worked in a floral nursery.

"I remember some mighty powerful storms when we lived there," he said. "Mama and daddy tied all of us together with a sheet so we wouldn't blow away. As it was the house blew over to one side, but we all stayed together," he said.

Ernest remembers how the family hunted with bows and arrows. "We made our own, and used sling shots as well. We'd tie a string on the arrow to shoot the fish and just pull them right up out of the clear river water," he noted.

Ernest's faithful visitor in the nursing home is his sister Rosa's boy, Lewis. Rosie married Guilford Davis and the couple reared their family of twelve children north of Sanderson. Lewis, who lives in Macclenny, remembers the days of the early Williams family well.

"I was born on the old Bowman place, not far from Dinkins church," he said. "We moved around a few times, but mostly my father farmed and sharecropped."

"The place I lived the longest was an old log house and we slept on either a feather mattress or one we made from the moss we found in the woods," he said. "We didn't have an outhouse and had to use the creeks and woods. Mostly we used the creek. They tied a string out there and the girls went one way and the boys the other. We didn't have no toilet paper, they didn't make it back then, so we used what ever we could find that was soft -- rags, leaves, moss or corncobs," he said.

Lewis' first cousin, Horace Jackson "Curley" Williams, remembers those days well. Horace's father, Sidney, was the oldest child of General Jackson Williams and Elizabeth (Davis) Williams. Lewis' mother, Rosa, and Sidney were brother and sister.

Commenting on the days before the outhouse or privy, as some people of that day called it, he said, "We used red corn cobs first, and then the white, that way we made sure we were clean," he laughed.

Horace was one of 15 children born to Sidney Samuel and Eva Marion (Sauls) Williams. "Them that had 15 children done that instead of cleaning the hominy pots," quipped Lewis.

Besides Horace, Sidney and Eva were the parents of Harley Adrian, William Kenneth, Sidney Samuel, Jr., Walter Bryan, Edward Clarence, John Harold, Nina Marie (Smith), Edith Marian (Wilcox), Doris Alethia (Stormant), and Elizabeth Pearl (Stormant). Two unidentified infants and Lila Jane died early.

"My father, who was born in Baker County, told me many stories about his life with Grandpa Jocham," said Horace, who was reared in a modest log home in Columbia County.

"It wasn't sealed," he said. "The boys slept in the loft and in the winter we used lots of warm blankets on our feather beds and the summers were naturally airconditioned. We were seldom sick and we ran the woods barefooted day and night, never afraid of any kind of animal and with so many rattlesnakes in the woods we never saw one that I remember. Maybe we'd see one at the edge of the field occa-

sionally, but never in the woods. It was a joyful time and lots of memories, like the time my brothers and I were hunting and thought we had trapped an opossum in a gopher hole, but when we sicked the dogs onto it, it turned out to be a skunk, and naturally we all got sprayed. We were sorta outcast in the family until we could get the stink off.

"I was out in the woods once with my brother, Harley, and his friend, Jack Kerce, gathering lightered wood for the fireplace and they gave me a chew of tobacco. I was under five years old and the tobacco made me very sick. I never took another chew of tobacco in my life," he said.

"My father was a great hunter, more-so than a great farmer, and I have so many wonderful memories of those hunting occasions I shared with him. We'd be in the fields plowing and a little sprinkle would come and dad would say, 'Boys, it's too wet to plow,' so we would all leave the fields and go to the house. Then, dad would say, 'Boys, there should be some rabbits out in those woods, so let's get the guns and go shoot rabbits'. That's how we got meat for supper many times. If it hadn't been for wild game like squirrels, fish, etc., our meals would have been meatless many times. My father, Sidney, was one of the best shots in the country and I wouldn't doubt the world if he could have ever gone into competition.

"We'd go quail hunting in the morning and dad would send me home with a big bag full by noon. Then dad would stay in the woods and come in at night with another big bag full. A lot of people would furnish him with the gun shells and he would sell his game. That brought us in some money for our family. We'd hunt gator and feed the tails to the dogs and we'd hunt coons for them, too. That's the way we'd have of feeding our dogs," he said.

Horace, given the nickname "Curley" during the years he worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps, better known as the CCC Camp, values his heritage with tremendous gusto.

"Those were not easy times, but the more I remember about those days, and the more I learn about my ancestors, the more I appreciate them and those times," he said.

He left behind the log cabin home he shared with his parents and brothers and sisters when he graduated in a class of 13 from high

school in Mason, a small community south of Lake City in 1940. He took treasured memories with him and they are still indelibly printed in his mind.

"In those days, a doctor would make house calls for most any reason, and I still thrill at the sounds I recall of a new baby being born. And the conversation between the old country doctor and my mother still ring from that old log cabin, as me and my brothers lay in our beds in another room.

"And I shiver to think how we did what we called cooning fish from beneath old logs when the water in the river was low. We would reach our hands down in those holes to catch us a mess of fish and today how the thought terrifies me to think how we could have gotten a hold of a moccasin, or snapping turtle. Memories flood my mind of hog killing days, and how good those chittlin's used to be my mama cooked, and how my mama would take a big stick to beat the dirt out of our clothes before washing them in a big wash pot in the yards. When people ask me if we had running water in our home when I grew up, I say, 'Why, of course we had running water; my mother would say, 'Horace, run to the well and get me some water, and run right back,' so we did have running water, and the old saying, 'Water Jack, you ought'er been there and half way back' was a common adage.

"I well remember my first pair of shoes mama bought from a neighbor because when their order from Sears Roebuck arrived they were too small for our neighbor's child. I had to pack them away in a trunk until mama could get a pair of shoes for my sister. It didn't hurt us to go around barefooted."

His work with the CCC began on July 5, 1940, took him as far as California, and when he returned to Florida, he found work at the ship-yards during the war. He returned to Jacksonville long enough to find the perfect mate while attending church. He married Inez Parker, who he declares is the best cook in the "whole wide world." They became the parents of one son, Jack, and two daughters, Rene and Kathleen, who blessed them with grandchildren, Doug, Jennifer, Derek, Craig, and, thus far, one great-granddaughter named Sarah.

"She's a little princess," he says with great pride.

Horace retired in 1986 after 42 years as a switchman and conductor for the Seaboard Railroad, which eventually, through the years, went through several name changes. He and Inez have travelled through each of the 50 states except for Hawaii and that's because Inez is afraid to fly.

Destiny has taken him to many places throughout the world in his work as a minister of the gospel. In addition to his work with the railroad, he was pastor of a church he built in Jacksonville, the Hillcrest Church of God. That responsibility took him to Africa and a visit to nine countries. Now, all of those memories and experiences are carefully documented for his posterity in his personal diary.

Today, he is continually seeking to know more of his ancestors. He is active in the Williams family reunion, held annually in the Taylor section of Baker County. He values the memories he shares with family members and especially enjoys meeting with his surviving uncle and cousins.

As they gather in the nursing home to share family stories with their lone surviving uncle, Ernest, Lewis and Horace recall such stories as the one when their grandfather, General, journeyed to Lake City to buy a new Ford.

"He paid \$688 for it and said the man told him he'd had a real good year, he sold three cars," said Lewis. He remembers that his grandfather was also a convention-singing school teacher. In those days people who loved to harmonize together attended conventions held mostly at local churches. People came from all around to attend."

Lewis, born in 1918, completed the tenth grade at Sanderson. "My first job was on the Glen St. Mary Nursery and I was paid 12 1/2 cents an hour for hard labor," he said. He eventually worked many years as a mechanic for Firestone before retiring.

"Back in those days, I remember the school principal, Will Cragg, boarded with us and had to walk the three miles to school. They paid him \$15 a month, and the woman teacher made \$12.50," he said.

"I remember that when we wanted to go get a drink of water during class we held up one finger, and if we needed to go to the out-house we held up two," he said.

"And if you got a whipping at school, watch out, you'd get another when you got home. That's just the way it was back then," he said.

"When I wasn't in school, I was plowing. I remember being behind the plow as early as four and a half years old. My head didn't reach the top of it and when the plow hit a root, the handle would hit me side of the head," he said.

"My parents were very strict, they didn't put up with nonsense or disrespect, and would beat you with limbs off a tree or a gallberry bush. If they told you to do something you'd just better do it," he continued.

"I picked the banjo at lots of frolics back then, and that's where I met my wife," he said. Lewis married Sarah Lee Fish and they became the parents of seven children: Noah, Ernestine (Griffin), Russell, Leonard, Cecil Guilford, Walter and Sarah Lee.

"They were delivered by Grace Barton, who was a midwife, and I paid her \$15 a piece," he said.

"Back in them days, people had lots of fights. They didn't have respect for each other and they'd kill you," he said. "I think they are a lot more educated now than they were in those days and you don't hear of as many murders. They'd get something against you and so much hate until they'd either fight you or kill you over trivial things. Them were violent days.

"My daddy, Guilford Davis, was a strong man with huge muscular arms, and I can tell you, he loved to fight," he said. "When he was 65 years old, he could hold on to something and posture his body out straight. He was a real powerful man. I remember that he and Jack Davis had a coffin house just north of Sanderson. They made lots of caskets for people," he said.

"Back then, people stayed up all night with the dead because in them days they didn't have funeral homes. Some of those old farm houses didn't have a door and if they didn't guard the corpse the animals would come in and gnaw on 'em. That's how the custom of staying up all night started, someone had to guard off the animals," he said seriously.

Lewis declares that infant babies, if left while their mothers worked in the fields, were in danger of snakes. "I've seen a many an

infant with a snake down it's throat. The snake would be trying to drink the milk. You had to be careful about that."

Fires were dangerous too, he said. "I've been out there in the field and seen houses on fire. Everyone would run to help put it out," he said.

"My grandpa General told me that Grandpa Jocham's first wife had a wild cat jump on her and she killed it singlehandedly. People just don't believe it when you tell them these things; I know my own children will say they don't believe it. Well, they don't because they weren't there. I was there and I know it's true."

Lewis Davis is a man of much humor. Discussing the most serious subject, he can make you chuckle. And the way he tells his stories make you wonder if it's true, or a joke.

He convincingly says all of his family stories are the truth.

Horace's most vivid memories are centered around hunting game in the woods with his father and fishing with him in the river.

"My father was more of a hunter than a farmer," he said. "And he loved to pass down the stories of Great Granddaddy Jocham, like the time Grandpa Jocham was hunting down by the creek bank with a double barreled shotgun. He said he came upon a big rattlesnake, so he started to shoot the snake and all of a sudden there was a bear on one side of him and a wild panther on the other. He was really upset and didn't know which to shoot first, and wondered what he should do. He figured he'd shoot the snake first, because it was the closest to him, so he aimed and hoped the shot would scare off the panther and bear, so he fired with both barrels and the gun flew apart and the ram rod killed the snake and each barrel killed the bear and panther, and the panther fell in the creek and came up with a boot filled with fish."

Horace and Lewis are proud of their grandfather's action during the Civil War.

"We've been told the stories by our fathers and grandfathers many times," said Horace.

The two men remember the stories told to them by their fathers about Jocham's experiences in the Battle of Olustee.

"Jocham related the story to Uncle Guilford Davis, who told it to me, of how 500 Federal soldiers got caught in quicksand and disappeared," said Horace.

"Yeah, and the calvary lost horses and cannons, too," said Lewis.

They said it happened at Cone Head Branch, oftentimes called Coon Head Branch.

John Daniel 'Jocham' Williams served in Company K, Second Regiment in the Florida Cavalry. His tombstone reads that he died April 27, 1896 at the age of 75 years. Research shows that Jocham's birth year could not have been 1821 as etched on his monument, but instead, because of family documents and records, it is estimated to be about 1812.

One can only imagine today how it must have been when the pioneering Williams children ran free and barefoot down the sandy roads and lanes listening to the whippoorwills announcing the first days of Spring. Off they'd go, skipping through the woods shoeless, stopping occasionally to dig up a white fluffy root called Indian bread. Or taking home some wild sassafras for mother to make a stimulating beverage from its root, sweetened with homemade brown sugar, or to be used as a medicine when needed for dispelling chills and fever, such as with measles. Or they might dig up a palmetto, remove the husk and eat the tender white bud, considered a delicacy. Or when Uncle Roy Williams showed them how to find the "candy stick" in the branch of the Tupelo gum. Or gathering the "chewing paste" of the hardened gum of the pine or sweet gum trees to make a very delectable chewing gum. And, if the boys could get away with it, they would roll homemade cigarettes from "rabbit" tobacco, a species of dried sumac that grew in the woods.

How exciting the children must have found the starry nights as they watched the twinkling lights illuminating the woods with the glowing firefly or "lightning bugs." Or the thrill of finding the glow worms, eel worms or earth worms for fish bait. And, just before sunset, watching the dragonfly or mosquito hawk darting back and forth, breathlessly holding up a finger and hoping one would light on it if they were very still and quiet. All this and more, in the glory of that natural environment of nature, they testify.

Then, of course, there were moments when the family had to fight the circle of biting yellow flies while they were trying to catch an

honest mess of fish, or the mosquitoes that you hoped would be decoyed by the bright light burning in the front yard from a wood pile. And during dinner, when the table was laden with such things as peach or pear cobbler, someone's job would be to swat the pesky flies with a piece of paper or a homemade fly swatter.

As the Williams family saw the sun sink into the western horizon beyond the tree tops they marveled at its mighty orb of light.

"We used to think that the moon was just a little ways up there and that we could actually see the man in the moon smiling down on us, never dreaming that someday a real man would actually step on that part of our dreams," said the cousins of their experience.

Those were the days of tradition and superstition, they said, when people believed that dreams had obvious meanings, as well as riddles, puzzles, and fortune telling -- and that certain persons had power to put a spell on you. It was the time when the belief in fairies, spooks and haunted houses were real, when families had confidence in patent medicines and that certain signs or occurrences were a true indication of that which would surely come to pass.

Children were told that if they would walk backward to the well under a clear sky at noon on the 22nd day of June, holding a mirror over their head, they would surely see the image of the one they would marry reflected on the water in the well.

Children were told that if they would break a wishbone or breastbone from the fowl beneath a table and lay up the larger fragment expressing a wish, that whatever they wished for would come to pass. It took two to break the wishbone and the one getting the larger portion was the lucky one to get his wish come true.

Parents were strict, and no, the majority of them didn't put up with nonsense, they said. They didn't have time for it. Nevertheless, the love that was generated among the early pioneering clans and the deep respect the children held for their parents who did their best to feed and clothe the family through the hardships they were to endure, is a blaze of adoration in the hearts of those who can remember. Those who can't remember, and who don't choose to believe the path they trod, will never know the true wonder of all of it, the cousins agree.

"Those were peaceful times sitting around the fireplace with our family, shelling peanuts or trying to warm ourselves by getting warm on one side then turning to warm the other side. And oh, those old fashioned peanut boilings. We'd get us a big old wash pot, fill it with peanuts and water, and while the old folks would sit around and talk about their good old times, the young folks would play games and sometimes some courtin' would be going on. And the times when neighbors would get together and help cut timber to clear a field for planting. It was called a log rolling, as they rolled the logs out of the way so they could plow, or the wood sawings when men would gather to saw enough wood to last several months. There would always be a big meal fixed by the women and a dance afterwards for entertainment."

Horace, the son of Sidney Samuel and grandson of General Jackson Williams, the son of Jocham, says he can never pay enough tribute to his mother, Eva Marion Sauls, born March 24, 1893 in Alachua County Florida. The couple galloped away in a horse and buggy from Alachua County on December 6, 1909 and got married.

"She bore 15 children and raised 12 to adulthood," he began. "She had a hard life, and never had, until late in life, electricity to cook or wash with. She would get up early before daybreak and cook breakfast for her family, wash all the dishes, then go to the fields and help hoe corn or peanuts until around eleven o'clock. Then she'd return to the house and fix dinner for us. Now, they don't call it dinner in the middle of the day, but I can't get used to calling it anything else. Dinner was then at noontime, and supper at night. But when we had eaten our dinner, and rested a little while, we'd go back to the field. Mama would finish dinner, do the dishes, and then she'd come back to the field and hoe again, unless it was wash day, but she was always busy. And, doing all of this, my mother was one of the most happy and cheerful persons I've ever known. I've heard her sing many times while she beat the clothes on the block to remove the dirt, and while she rubbed them on the washboard, or while she was at her sewing machine or anything else she might be doing. She sang beautiful songs like 'Bringing in the Sheaves,' 'Jesus Loves Me,' 'The Victor's Song,' and 'Sweet Hour of Prayer.' She seemed very happy and con-

tented, and despite her hard life, I never heard her complain. To me, she was the most precious lady that has ever lived.

"I think my mama could make the best biscuits in the world and after we left home and would come back to visit, she would always have a jar of fig preserves or something like that to eat with her hot biscuits. And how my children loved her cinnamon rolls. They would beg to go to Grandmas to eat them and her chicken and rice and sweet potatoes, all cooked on her wood stove. Her cooking would put these modern cooks to shame because she could take any food and make it come out so good. It's just a joy and pleasure to remember the times when we'd sit around an old log table with wooden benches and have a good meal and my mama was always so contented to see her family well-fed and well-clothed. She had a rich full life and I believe God has smiled upon her all of her life and I'm sure she has a great reward. Even in the days of the Great Depression, we were like many other people then, very poor, especially by today's standards, but we didn't know we were poor until somebody told us. I can look back now and even though we didn't have quite as much as some folks, my life was rich and full and I wouldn't trade my life I had back there in the country and the way I was brought up for anything in the world."

Horace Williams expresses the sentiments of countless other Williams descendants who trek *annually to share a reunion and pay homage to the heritage they cherish and celebrate. Each year they tread reverently to the sacred and hallowed spot where their revered patriarch Jocham's eternal resting place is peacefully nestled beneath the towering majestic oaks. They come to meditate, to reminisce, and to rekindle their historic beginnings with other kindred souls who prize their common bond.

They exhibit the greatest devotion as they amicably erect a city of tents and set up camp, many wearing Civil War grays in honor of Jocham's and other family members' brave record of patriotism. Assembling on this overnight excursion, they will seek amid the ghostly land to pay homage to the man they never knew personally, but whose memory they feel fortunate to honor.

As the blackness of night descends upon the thick and sprawling natural scrub oaks and spiralling tall pines, a rustling wind plays a

mystical tune jointly with the sedate sounds of the gentle swirls of the placid St. Mary's River. It is the same soft echo of the tranquilizing serenade heard centuries ago by those who occupied this celebrated expanse, and tonight the staunch and loyal offspring will be lulled to an enchanting night's sleep, mingled with the stimulating dreams of the history they are honoring. Then, as dawn begins to cast the first rays of luminous sun light flowing in golden streams upon the thick dew-shrouded woodlands, Jocham's faithful posterity will rise to meet this novel day they set aside annually, with unwavering convictions, to pay their respect and homage to an era they revere.

In the quiet and sacred setting, a bugleman's stirring soft tones of "Taps" will drift passionately throughout the sphere, mingling with the mesmerizing sounds of the gentle tannic waters of the timeless old river, lapping mildly at the shoreline, as it just keeps rolling along, carrying with it centuries of obscure and unsung stories of connecting generations and timeless immortal family traditions.

*Williams Family Reunion is held annually on 4th Saturday in April at the Taylor Church in Taylor, Florida.

Brown, Raulerson Families

After Grandma milked the cow we could taste the alcohol. I remember one of Grandma's cows got into a moonshine still out in the woods and came home drunk."

Nettie Ruth Brown

"I wish my children could have lived through some of the things I have lived through. They've missed a lot."

Dean Rhoden

"My mama and daddy recycled long before it was the thing to do,"

Gail Brown

GM Brown

Faye C. Rhoden

Imagine having the ideal family. Imagine having your ideal family continue for generations and generations, long after you are departed from this life. Impossible you say. Especially today. Well, think again if you are pessimistic, because there is a family in Baker County who says they have inherited the ideal life, one that began for them generations ago. It is a life, they recall, established with respect and honor, and a succession of generations who have held it in high esteem, and who faithfully carry the banner today as an ensign to yet another generation who are following in the steps of their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and on and on.

In a world where love and respect for family ties are fast declining, it exists in its fullest for Nettie Ruth Brown, Faye Claudine Brown Rhoden, Betty Jeaudon Brown Madden, Marcus Eldyn Brown,

50th Wedding Anniversary, 1979 of Ray and Athena Brown

Seated: Ray Elgene Brown, Ray Leonard Brown, Athena Irene Raulerson Brown, Nettie Ruth Brown.

Standing: Faye Claudine Brown Rhoden, George Marvin Brown, Betty Jaudson Brown Madden, Marcus Eldyn Brown, Athena Gail Brown, Marjorie Ann Brown Dunn.



George Colquitt "Col" Brown and Minnie Jane Taylor Brown



First Row (l-r): Rebecca Ann Rhoden Olgetree, Christopher Lee Davis, Matthew Eldyn Brown, Teresa Lea Brown, Robert Andrew Dunn, Howard Scott Dunn.

Second Row (l-r): Timothy Brown Madden, Berry F. Rhoden, Sr., Raye Claudine Brown Rhoden, Leonard Brown, Athena Irene Raulerson Brown, Marjorie Ann Brown Dunn, Howard Ray Dunn.

Third Row (standing l-r): Deborah Renci Brown Ferreira, Ray Elgene Brown, Evalina Sweat Brown, Mitchell Elgene Brown, Michael Ray Brown, Connie Dale Rhoden, D. McGlew, Marvin Anthony Madden, Betty Jaudson Brown Madden, James Marvin Madden, Marcus Eldyn Brown, Dolores Warren Brown, Athena Gail Brown, George Marvin Brown, Julia Helena 'Penny' Doka Brown, Berry Floyd Rhoden, Jr., Nettie Ruth Brown.

Grandchildren not pictured: Robert Dean Rhoden, Danielle Renci Brown, Penny Irene Brown.



At home in Taylor, Florida Minnie and Coll Brown



**Edith Raulerson Altman, parents
Lon and Katie Raulerson and
husband J.B. Altman**



**L-R: Kizzie Smith Fish,
America Dinkins
Raulerson, Mrs. Conner**



**Ray Leonard
Brown and
Athena Irene
Raulerson Brown**

**Athena's Family (l-r): Edith
Idella Raulerson Altman,
Ruble Lee Raulerson Yonn
Lewis, Cecil Raulerson, Ray
Leonard Brown, Athena Irene
Raulerson Brown**



**The Brown Family
Seated (l-r): Edna Rowan
Brown, Irene Brown
Dugger, Doris Annette
Brown Batten, Rudolph
Brown Loadholtz, Arlene
Miles Brown, Pauline
Brown Johnson, Ruth
Brown Ricker, Minnie Lee
Brown Futch.**

**2nd Row (standing l-r):
George Curtis Brown,
Leslie Dugger, George W.
Batten, Sr., Ray Leonard**

**Brown, Athena Irene Raulerson Brown, Basil Harvey Brown, Jerome
Johnson, John Ricker, Mabry Futch.
Not Pictured: Lucious Brown, Thomas Brown, Everett Loadholtz.**

George Marvin Brown, Marjorie Ann Brown Dunn, Athena Gail Brown and a late brother, Ray Elgene Brown. They are the children of Ray and Athena Raulerson Brown, but it does not begin or end with Ray and Athena. It begins and extends to other connecting families who also recognize the value of the inheritance they've received from their Baker County forebears, and with gratitude and determination they plan to keep the past immortal. The four generations of Grandparents that lived during their lifetime have forever influenced their lives, along with the stories passed on to them of the preceding generations.

This story is about that bounteous legacy and the hope that its influence will pass to the succeeding generations who will continue to hold their heritage in high regard. And this is how they tell it.

"Grandpa 'Coll' used to talk to us about his father, Hugh Brown, as if he were in the other room," said Nettie Ruth of her grandfather, George Colquitt 'Coll' Brown. "He'd relate how his father rode off to war on horseback during the Confederacy and how he fought and was wounded in the battles of Manassas (Second Bull Run), and the Wilderness (May 4– 20, 1864). He told us over and over the patriotic and inspiring story of his father, when he was sent home to recuperate from his battle wounds. When news reached him that the Yankees were going toward Tallahassee and the Confederates were gathering troops, young and old, to stop them, Grandpa Hugh left to fight at the Battle of Olustee, where he lost a leg in combat.

"Grandpa Coll kept Great Grandpa Hugh's image alive for us. He was proud of him and he diligently taught his children and grandchildren to be patriotic, to believe in and support our state and national governments. We were taught we had an obligation to vote, and mama or daddy better not find out we didn't. We were taught it was our civic duty, and if we were called to jury duty, we were obligated and to think on it as a privilege, not a burden. They wanted us to respect the law and do our duty with heart and passion and this has been passed down to us from generation to generation. None of us would even consider not doing what they taught and expected us to do," she said.

Hugh Brown married Caroline Raulerson late in life, and they owned about 160 acres of land with a log home known previously as

the Burnsed Blockhouse. Jim Burnsed built it around the late 1830's as an impregnable fortress to insure his family's safety from Indian attacks. Hugh purchased the house about 1871 and after living a full and varied life in it, died and was buried in the nearby walled Magnolia Cemetery where family members, and some others in the community, were laid to rest more than a century ago.

His grandchildren say he was as impressive as the house he lived in that was built with massive corner joints fashioned by dovetailing. The half-sawn plugs in the logs that secured a place for the gun ports, in case of attack, remain intact to this day. The dwelling now claims the name of "The Coll Brown House" and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It was the four sons and six daughters of Coll and his wife, Minnie, who split pine into fence rails and criss-crossed the timbers around the farm to secure a place to plant their crops, grind their cane, and protect their livestock. And just as important to the family's safety and livelihood, the Browns say, was the tender nurturing and the cultivation of stern discipline of character.

The first-born children of Ray and Athena Brown grew up in a house just down the lane from the big, two-story Coll Brown log fortress. They often spent the night with their grandparents inside its bulwark walls. Their father, Ray, was born there as were their aunts and uncles -- Tom, Curtis, Lucious, Rudolph, Minnie Lee, Basil, Doris, Ruth, Irene and Pauline. They highly prize the ideals instilled by their forebears.

"Grandpa Coll and his first wife, Lizzie Rewis, had a son before she died. He then married our grandma, Minnie, who was a school teacher," said Nettie Ruth. "Grandma was the daughter of Thomas Paul Taylor, a Methodist minister whose forebears pioneered the community of Taylor. Grandma was a very dedicated religious person, with a strong devout background," she said.

"Grandpa Taylor used to visit our family and tell us the most exciting stories, and I'd think, 'Boy, these stories are wonderful,' and come to find it out they were Bible stories," said Dean. "And they were influencing."

"For as long as I can remember, we all traditionally went to Grandma Brown's house for holidays and special occasions," said

Nettie Ruth. "They taught us unity from the cradle and inspired family traditions in each of us. We learned family loyalty and were taught that even if you had a quarrel with a family member, which happens in the best of families, we were never to go out and tell it, but keep it in the family and get it settled. Today, that is really one thing that stands out in my mind."

"We were taught by example that if any family member had financial problems you helped the family. You might have to pinch pennies yourself, but you helped the one in distress," said Dean.

"Family solidarity and religious life have been passed down to all these generations of great grandchildren," said Nettie Ruth. "And they instilled in us a respect for older people, and we learned early to love all of our aunts and uncles and to treat them with respect."

"Grandpa Coll was about 6-foot-3, and he had white hair and huge hands," remembered his granddaughter Dean. "He always shaved with a straight razor. It hung by a mirror on the back porch alongside his razor 'strop'. He used the 'strop' to sharpen his razor, and we kids knew not to bother it," she said.

"He had a big, highback rocker, and he'd sit on the front porch and rock and sing hymns. You could hear him all the way down the lane to our house," said Nettie Ruth. "And he always had a pick that he'd pick his teeth with. He wore bib overalls and he had a toothpick made out of a goose quill that he kept in his front pocket."

"Every morning we could hear him coming down the lane to let the cows out. He kept them penned up in the field where he planted potatoes so the cows would fertilize the area. He'd be singing to the top of his lungs, something like 'Oh, bear me away on your snowy wings', or 'Oh, They tell me of an uncloudy day,' " said Dean.

"Grandpa Coll never smoked; he didn't drink liquor or swear; he didn't even drink coffee or tea. He never joined a church, but he made sure grandma was able to go. He owned automobiles, but he never learned to drive. A 1918 Ford he owned was one of the first with a starter inside the car. His sons would take grandma back and forth to church, and after they left home and our grandparents reverted back to using the horse and wagon, he continued to make sure grandma got to church," said Dean.

"Grandma Minnie belonged to the Methodist Church until it split, then she went across the river and joined the Congregational Holiness."

"She had lots of geese," said Nettie Ruth. "I remember grandma picking the geese feathers to make pillows. She washed clothes in long wash-troughs in the back yard. Grandma Brown had a temper. You just knew what she did and didn't want you to do, and you did or didn't do it. I can remember the first year I was in school and lots of times I'd go to grandma's house afterwards. She would always have some sweet bread in her kitchen safe. You could sit 10-12 people easily around her kitchen table. I remember that sometimes she'd take me to church with her in the mule and wagon."

"We were back and forth all the time from our Raulerson grandparents' plain clapboard farm house to our Brown grandparents' farm," said Dean.

"Our grandparents were very productive farmers," said Nettie Ruth. "They would take their fruits and vegetables into Jacksonville to market by mule and wagon. They would leave the night before and drive into town, spend the night, sell the produce, and then it would take another day to drive back home.

"Grandma always had a cow and made homemade butter. Grandma would can her butter in jars just like her fruits and vegetables. I remember that one of grandma's cows got into a moonshine still out in the woods and came home drunk. After grandma milked the cow, we could taste the alcohol. She was so angry. She shut the cow up in the pasture, and it was a long time before grandma would let her go back out again. She'd say, 'I want all that stuff gone out of her.' All the boys in the neighborhood were tickled when they heard that Aunt Minnie's cow got drunk," laughed Nettie Ruth.

"I can still see one of her cows coming down the lane drunk and her knees buckling," she continued. "There were moonshine stills in the woods in those days, and if anyone knew where they were; no one told. It was thought of as a necessary part of life back then. Even if you didn't own one, you still didn't turn those that had them in.

"All of us children loved to visit with our grandparents in the blockhouse. I remember sleeping upstairs and looking out the two

windows that were under the eaves. They didn't have shutters then and there was a little place where you could look out. It used to be the lookout window for the Indians.

"We knew three of our great grandparents: Kizzie Smith Fish, America Dinkins Raulerson and Thomas Paul Taylor. All of them instilled in us the value of work and earning what we got. They taught us that if we told someone we were going to do something, then do it. We could not use any bad language, and they said if we did bad things, we'd have bad things happen to us. They taught us that if anyone did something unfair to us, we shouldn't take revenge. We were taught that 'Vengeance is mine saith the Lord.' That was repeated to us by our parents and grandparents over and over.

"Grandpa Brown always had animal feed, and people from all around came to buy it. One Sunday afternoon, a man came from across the river from Georgia to buy some corn and grandpa told him, 'No, I will not sell corn on Sunday.' But he asked the man if he had enough corn to feed the stock that night, and the man said 'No,' so Grandpa told him to go out there to the barn and get enough feed for his animals. He told him to return the following day, and he'd sell him some corn.

"We did not go swimming or hunting on Sunday, that was the Lord's day, and we were to respect it."

"I remember that grandpa was kinda like a parole officer and people on probation had to come to Grandpa and visit at least once a week," she continued.

"The most heart breaking thing," added Dean, "was when our Grandma Brown had a heart attack and had to be hospitalized. We didn't know if she would survive or not, but they decided that she wouldn't be able to come back to live at the farm. Grandpa walked through the house and was disposing of their belongings and we saw him cry. I had never seen my grandpa cry, and it was heartbreaking to see this big, old, strong man cry. They lived in Jacksonville with Irene, one of their younger children, and they never got to return to their beloved farm. The house stayed vacant until it was sold, but in their honor, even today, we still continue to have our family reunions faithfully. Grandma died two weeks after we celebrated her birthday with

a special dinner. That's when I think I realized the value of the farm and I learned to appreciate the historical worth. It will always be a place I love to recall and think of the fond memories.

"In 1938, our parents purchased a farm, cleared the fields and repaired the farmhouse. In 1940, we moved from the house where we lived down the lane from our grandparents and settled south of North Prong Church. We never moved again."

The Brown family lived just a short distance from Athena's parents, Lon and Katie Fish Raulerson. Their grandfather, Alonzo Raulerson, descends from a long line of Raulersons who, until 1813, spelled the name Rollison or Rawlinson or Rolyson, depending on who wrote it.

When David B. Mitchell, Governor of the State of Georgia, issued a military commission to Jacob Raulerson as Lieutenant of the 335th District of Militia in Wayne County, Georgia, on July 20, 1813, it was the first time the name was spelled Raulerson. Prior to that time, the name Raulerson did not exist, and since that time, Jacob's brothers -- William, Nimrod and Noel -- along with their sister, Fanny, all adopted the present day spelling, as have their descendants in the Florida/Georgia area.

This account skips several generations to William "Billy" Raulerson. He was the Raulerson who ambled down into Baker territory from Charlton County, about 1814, and established a ferry across the North Prong of the St. Mary's River on February 22, 1843. Billy, often referred to as Ferry Bill, or Uncle Bill, married Elizabeth "Battie" Moore, who possessed a half-Indian heritage, and the couple had at least nine children.

The particular line this story will follow belongs to one of their sons, Westberry, who married Elizabeth Canaday, and passes to one of their sons, William "Pink" Raulerson through his marriage November 5, 1879, to the legendary America Texas Dinkins. America gave birth to 13 children and reared 41 others. When their son, Alonzo, married Katie Idella Fish, their daughter Athena fell heir, and passed on to her children, a remarkable family lineage spanning nine known generations of Raulersons in Baker and Charlton counties.

"Grandpa Alonzo was called 'Lon'. He never joined a church, but he was always there, sitting up in the 'amen' corner," said Dean. "His

opinion was highly valued and they usually consulted him about everything. At annual meeting, Grandma Katie always made the unleavened bread and the real wine. She was in charge of the towels for the annual foot washing and she would always have them washed nice and clean and neatly ironed. The men sat on one side of the church and washed each other's feet, and the women sat on the other side of the church, and did the same. The children would play on the outside of the church and they would wash feet, too, just like the adults. As they grew older and understood the significance of the ceremony, they could do it inside with the adults."

"They'd have church all week long. On Sunday, they'd have about four preachers, and it seemed as if it lasted forever," she continued.

"We'd have dinner on the ground, Saturday and Sunday," said Nettie Ruth. "It seemed like we cooked around the clock, getting ready for it. We had so many people spend the night with us, we'd have people sleeping on the floor on feather mattresses and pallets.

"Grandpa Lon usually wore a white shirt, a bow tie and suspenders. And if preacher Jim Williams wasn't there, Grandpa Lon would lead the singing, and I remember that he had the most beautiful voice. Grandma Katie didn't say or do anything at the church services. She did all the preparation, but at the church, grandpa was the spokesman. Grandma might be called upon to lead the prayer, and she would, because at Pine Level Methodist Church, they called upon both men and women to pray," she said.

"I stayed with Grandma Katie about five months one time when she got sick," said Dean. "She had always kept her house spotless as well as her yards. After she got sick, we helped her, and she would have us sweep the yards with a yard broom until they were spotless too. She was very strict and believed children were to be seen and not heard. They were very orderly and stern, but they were loving. We knew to mind them just by the tone of their voices."

"Grandma Katie was about 5-feet-7 and wore her hair pulled back in a bun. She was always neat and clean. Her yards were full of colorful flowers, and she had lots of beautiful hanging baskets on her porch."

"We got our flowers for graduation from Grandma Raulerson's house," said Nettie Ruth. "They were always so plentiful and pretty."

"I remember when Grandma Katie's mother, Kizzie, died," said Nettie Ruth. "I was just a little girl, about five years old, and nobody was paying attention to me, so I just wandered around while everyone was busy getting grandma's funeral ready because she died one day and they were burying her the next. I remember a Mrs. Crawford was showing the other women how to fold, cut and notch the material so it would make pretty flowers in the cloth. I remember Grandma Kizzie being laid out on a cooling board, and out in the furnace shelter, men were building the casket. I don't remember the funeral, but I remember the other things and it stands out in my mind to this day."

"Grandma Katie was very strict, very orderly. Their whole life was like that," said Nettie Ruth. "She doctored everyone around. She did a lot of sewing for people, especially if a child needed clothes or if a family got burned out. I've worn underwear that she made out of flour sacks. We got sugar sacks from the moonshiners and mama would make us things from the material," she said.

"Grandpa Lon was a shoe cobbler and he would take all these shoes his mother would send him to resole," said Nettie Ruth. "He mended all the shoes in the neighborhood, and both he and grandma were always very helpful to neighbors," she said.

"Our grandparents were married nine years before they had any children. Then their first child, Athena, was born. Their second child, born 19 months later, was a little son they named Alvie, who lived a month. Besides our mother and Alvie, they also had Cecil, Edith and Ruby Lee.

"Grandpa Lon had a Model T Ford, and he loved that car. One time he drove it to Macclenny and it made the news," said Dean. "He kept his car in the shed, and on Saturday mornings, he cleaned the car up. He would take a white oilcloth and lay it out on the ground and he took all the stuff from under the hood of the car, cleaned it good and then arranged it in order on that white oilcloth. I could sit on the fence and watch him, but I couldn't get off the fence and come near where he was working because he was afraid I might get sand on the parts."

"Grandpa Lon's mother was America Dinkins. She and Great Grandpa William Raulerson (everyone called him Pink because of his complexion) lived about two miles through the woods from us. Grandma always had on a big white apron, and I can remember her sitting on her front porch with several other older women who always seemed to be there," said Nettie Ruth. "She raised 54 children, and took in other men and women who either didn't have a place to go, or who were temporarily stranded without a place to live. Grandpa said he used to come home and discover that all the beds would be filled and he'd find a quilt and lay down in the corner because there would be so many people.

Great Grandmother America fed a lot of people, especially on Sundays, when they would leave church and come to her house to eat. Even after America got sick and had to stay home, they would come over to her house to have service. They'd come sit on the porch laden with beautiful hanging baskets or just take their place somewhere amid the colorful flowers that bloomed in her yard. Most of them would have already attended church services at Pine Level but would still come to Grandma's house to hear the preaching again."

"Great Grandma America had a sawmill and she donated the land and lumber to build the Pine Level Methodist Church," said Dean. "She also had rice cleaning and grist mills. She really loved the Lord and she did all she could to fulfill her obligations to Him. Someone once asked her why she took in all the other children and families when she had 13 of her own, and she said that the Lord had blessed her with so many material blessings that she wanted to pass it on to others and to share her good fortune."

Many of the people who lived in America's home helped on the farm or worked for the sawmill and grist mill. That is, unless they grew too old and feeble. The older women helped in the typical pioneer kitchen preparing meals, either in the fireplace or on her wood burning stove, for the countless souls she took in. Many of them lived there until they grew old and died, while others moved on when they were able. She was known throughout the area as one who would provide a home for the less fortunate.

America Texas Dinkins Raulerson is described as having flaming red hair and keen brown eyes and her short frame carried about 170 pounds.

"She really spoiled us," said Dean. "She gave each of us three older children a goat one time. We took the goats home and daddy made us a goat cart, but he didn't like goats, especially one of them that was really mean. Daddy hated those goats, but as long as our grandmother lived, he took very good care of them out of respect. When she died, Daddy sold every last one of them because everyday he had to go get their heads out of the fence. They were also bad to eat up everything in sight."

Pink Raulerson, born in 1858, died in 1922. America lived until 1938. At her funeral service, she was eulogized as a woman whose works demonstrated her faith, sharing her home with the homeless, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, caring for the poor and needy. With her bounteous earthly life over, the property was divided and each of her 13 children inherited a 90- to 100-acre farm. According to her posterity, it can truly be said, "Her likes shall not pass our way again."

Education was particularly instilled in the Ray and Athena Brown children.

"Our parents instilled in us the need to work and not to depend on anyone else," said Nettie Ruth. "They particularly inspired us to obtain an education. Our mama paved the way for a lot of other women when she returned to school when I was in the 9th grade. At first, I was embarrassed when mama said she was going to do it; I didn't want to ride the school bus with my mama or be in class with my mama, but my grandparents talked to me and told me how proud they were of her and that I should be, too. They were really encouraging because mama wanted to get an education and they felt we should all support her. I understood when I saw how they felt, and I was always proud of mama after that. After mama finished her high school education, daddy went and got his, and mama went on to college.

"Some of the people in the community questioned mama and daddy about not letting us miss school to work on the farm," contin-

ued Nettie Ruth, who completed 12 years of school without missing a day.”

“Daddy would tell them there was plenty of time for us to work when we got in from school, so that is what we did,” said Dean. “We’d come in from school, get a snack and glass of water and go to the field and work.”

The Browns saw to it that their children’s lives were full and varied. Typically, it went something like this.

“Well, we didn’t go shopping on Sunday,” said Gail, the youngest of their children. “Our grandparents and our parents didn’t buy anything or sell anything on Sunday. Each Sunday morning, we’d get up and go to church. Sunday afternoon, after our dinner, was the day we visited family. We’d go to grandma and grandpa’s house or aunts and uncles. We never hunted or fished on that day; it was strictly set aside for church and family and you stuck by that. If anybody came by, needing feed or anything for their horses or cows, Grandpa would say, ‘I’ll give you enough to feed ‘em today, and tomorrow come back and if you need more we’ll settle up.’ Daddy would do the same thing. If people needed food, mama and daddy would take it to them. They would share meat from our cows, hogs and chickens, as well as vegetables out of the garden. If a person was in a bind, they’d give it to him, but they would never do business on Sunday. It was nothing for mama and daddy to load up the truck with vegetables and take it to families in need,” continued Gail.

“Sometimes people would have their house burn, and mama and daddy would give them a bedstead, feather mattress and pillows, things they could use,” said Dean.

“Daddy worked for the Forestry Service later in life, and he instilled in each of us an appreciation for nature,” said Gail. “He enjoyed growing a patch of cane so the grandchildren could see just how syrup was made. He’d plant the crop with all the family’s help, and everyone would come by and look at it growing. When it was ready, we’d all come home to have a cane grinding. He would make it a big social event and a time to be together and visit. Daddy tied the tractor to the cane mill and the grandchildren would ride around it, and everybody would feed the cane into the mill to get the juice.

Then we'd all go to the furnace shelter and cook it. It was an all day ordeal and we were worn out when it was over, but we all had good feelings about being together, and the kids were so proud of all they had accomplished."

"Mama would make the biscuits so the grandchildren could taste the syrup right after it was made," said Dean.

"That was one of our last big social events before daddy died, but it was important to daddy to carry on the traditions of his forefathers," she said.

"My friends are amazed to hear me talking about the work and traditions of my family," said Gail, who was born ten years after the Brown's older children. "They say, 'But you're not old enough to remember how to do those things,' like making syrup or killing hogs, making sausage and smoking bacon.

"One of my jobs before going to school every morning was to check the fire in the smoke house for daddy, and doing the same thing when I'd come home from school. But I remember all those things, like how to fry the bones and pack them in lard to preserve them for cooking and seasoning with back bones and ham hocks and rice. Children today don't know they can preserve food that way; it is a lost art," said the Westside Elementary School Principal. "I remember when we got indoor plumbing and put water inside our house because we were still pumping water and using an outhouse for a toilet when I was growing up."

"I wish my children could have lived through some of the things I have lived through. They've missed a lot," said Dean. "We didn't realize we were poor. Everyone around us lived in the same type of house, and were doing the same kind of things, going to the same school and church, or one similar to it."

"Our parents were way ahead of their time," continued Dean. "When mama had the courage to go to school, daddy would keep the children for mama the three summer months she was attending college in Gainesville. She would come home on weekends. People just could not believe that daddy would stay home and do that."

"Mama and daddy recycled long before it was the in thing to do," said Gail. "If clothes got too little for one of us, mama would cut it

down and make clothes for the smaller children. Everything was used. She didn't throw anything away and we inherited that. We're all pack rats, too. Mama would say, 'I might be able to use the hooks and eyes, or the buttons' from this old discarded and completely worn out material. And daddy might tear the barn down, but he would use the lumber to rebuild something else."

"I wore underwear and slips to school that mama made from flour sacks," said Dean. "Mama would use the 100-pound sugar sacks we'd get from the bootleggers and make our pillowcases, sheets and towels. I can remember when Purina Feed Company started putting out print sacks, and we had a lot of pretty dresses made from them. Some farmers would sell the sacks to us for five cents each."

"I wouldn't trade my family for anything," said Gail. "Even with the ups and downs, squabbles, aches and pains, I couldn't think of another family I'd want to be a member of. We've had disagreements, we've had illnesses, and we've had tragedies that any other normal family has, but mama and daddy raised us to stick together."

"They taught us that everything will work out and that nothing happens accidentally," said Dean. "They taught us that everything happens for a reason and everything happens for the best, and that we can handle it and no matter what it is or how bad it is, we'll get through it together."

"When my husband and I were living in the Canal Zone, our son Robert had a raging temperature that spiked the thermometer. They don't know how high it actually went, but it left him with severe brain damage. Daddy said, 'Dean, The Master never makes a mistake; there is a reason for this.'"

"And he believed that," said Gail. "He believed it was not an accident or a mistake, but there was a reason. When he was bitten by a rattlesnake, he said, 'I don't know why this happened to me, and I may not live to see the purpose for it, but there will be some good that will come out of this.' We looked at him wondering how he could believe this, but daddy truly believed it. He was 70 years old when that 6-foot-4-inch snake bit him."

"Our daughter Connie's baby was born with a problem at the roof of her mouth," said Dean. "She had to tube feed little Ashley, and

it took three hours per feeding for nine months. We took Ashley to visit daddy who was in the hospital at that time and when we walked in, daddy looked at Ashley and said, 'Connie, don't you worry about it, she'll out grow all of this.' Ashley turned into a beautiful little girl and is very intelligent. Connie always says, 'Granddaddy said it would be alright and that the Lord would take care of it. I trusted and believed also and Ashley is fine'.

"I don't care how old you get in life," continued Dean, "your upbringing influences the way you make decisions. When I got out on my own, I wondered what I'd do without mama and daddy telling me, but when things came up I'd always think, 'Now what would mama and daddy do in this situation?' and to this very day I still think that way."

"I grew up in the '60's," said Gail, "I'd hear some of my classmates say, 'I don't want to go home, I hate it, I don't want to be around my mama and daddy, and I don't want to be with my family, or I don't want to go here or there with my family.' I guess it was just the signs of the time, but I'd think, 'What's wrong with these people?' I'd look at them and think, something is the matter with you all if you don't want to go home and be with your family."

"After I married and we lived away, we just couldn't wait to visit back home," said Dean.

"There were seven children before I came along ten years later," said Gail. "And I remember how anxious we were for Dean, Berry and the children to come home on weekends when Berry was stationed in the service at Fort Benning. We'd go to bed knowing they would get there sometime during the night and they'd come by the way of the old wooden Reynolds bridge up by North Prong. Berry would be flying at low level and you could hear them when they reached the bridge with its loose boards that would go 'flem- flam.' I can still hear Daddy holler through the house, 'They're here!'. They'd come in and we'd all get up and have some coffee. Of course, that was his typical reaction when any of his children came home."

"Mama taught each one of us to cook and sew, the boys too," said Dean. "She would say to us that there may come times when we'd be on our own and would need to take care of ourselves. Our

brother, Ray, would say, 'Oh, I'll have a wife and she'll do all that' and Mama would say, 'But your wife might get sick and won't be able to do it, and you're going to have to take care of the children, cook for them, or sew buttons on, or sew up rips in garments.' She made sure they knew how. We all had to sew with our fingers before we could start on the sewing machine," she said.

Switching over from the horse and buggy days to the modern car had its funny moments for the family.

"I was locked up and left by myself in Taylor Church one time," said Dean. "Daddy thought I was with mama in the car, and mama thought I was with daddy in the wagon. By the time they arrived at my Aunt Lila Harvey's house and they asked each other, 'Where's Claudine?' and discovered I wasn't with either, they headed back to the church. There I was, standing at the window, staring out at all the tombstones with the moon shining down on them. At first, I was frightened, but then I thought, 'Now what could happen to me in the house of God?'"

"We developed faith early," said Gail. "I remember when mama died and we were all at the funeral home receiving friends. Someone came up to me at the coffin where I was and said she wanted to tell me something. She said, 'I learned real early about God and strong faith, and I learned it from your mother.' I asked her how and she told me that when mama was working as the secretary at Taylor School, she often had to come to the office suffering from severe asthma attacks. She said, 'Your mama could always calm me down so it wouldn't be so bad.' Then, she told me this story: She said that one day when she was in the office with an asthma attack, the Coca Cola man was there delivering cokes in glass bottles, not like the cans we have now. She said he was loading the Cokes into the Coke machine and one of the bottles exploded, cutting his hand. It was cut deep, she said. He came into the office with his hand wrapped in a towel soaked in blood and walked up to mama and said, 'I need help, I've hurt myself.' She said that mama looked at him and asked, 'Do you believe in God?', and the man said 'Yes,' and she said, 'Are you a Christian?', and he said, 'Yes', and mama said, 'If you are, then what I am about to do will help you, and she turned and got the Bible and

turned to Ezekiel 16:6, and read the verse about bleeding. And it stopped. The lady told me, 'I was just a little girl sitting there watching. Your mother closed that Bible and held his hand up, and it had quit bleeding. I knew that day that there was a God, and I learned from your mother what faith could do if you had faith in God'."

"Mama had a working religion; she practiced her religion. And she taught it to us and others by example."

"We used that Bible verse with mama one time," said Gail. "Mama had a massive hemorrhage and we had to take her to the hospital in Jacksonville. While she was in intensive care she had another hemorrhage. Mama told me to go find a Bible and I went out to the nurse's station and asked for one. I told them my mama wanted a Bible, so they got her one and she said to turn it to Ezekiel 16:6. I did and we laid our hands on her abdomen and read the verse and the hemorrhage stopped," she said.

Education was paramount with Ray and Athena Brown. But an education was expensive. Still they taught their children it was possible.

"They wanted us to have an education, but they taught us the value of working for it," said Dean. "They wanted us to pay our way as much as we could. Nettie Ruth started school at Mount Berry as a paid student, then the next year she was a work student. I was not accepted in Mount Berry as a work student and at the time mama and daddy couldn't send me, so therefore I couldn't go that year. Betty went up as a work student, George and Marjorie worked their way through. I didn't go to college until after my marriage to Berry (Rhoden), after he returned from the army," said Dean.

"I came along much later," said Gail. "Mama and daddy were able to pay my tuition, and I paid for all other expenses. The value of an education has passed down from one generation to the next.

"I worked for my room and board while attending cosmetology school," said Dean. "I stayed with my Aunt Rubye Lee and cooked and cleaned her house, did laundry, and so forth," she said.

"Our home was a happy home, but occasionally we could tell if mama and daddy had an argument like most people do, especially when they live together with eight children in a house. If mama went off singing 'Amazing Grace' and daddy went out to the barn or field

singing, 'When the Roll Is Called up Yonder,' we knew all was fine. If they weren't singing, you knew to behave yourself that day because things weren't quite right yet. Daddy had a sign he made that got our attention. He could put two of his fingers together and shake them at you, and I don't care where you were when he put them together and pointed them at you, you knew to behave. Mama had piercing brown eyes, and when she got angry, this right eyebrow went up, and if she ever looked at you and that right eyebrow went up, then you better quit whatever you were doing or you'd be in hot water."

Ray Brown died June 23, 1986. Athena died February 11, 1992.

"Before our parents died, we promised them we would stay together as a family," said Dean. "We told them not to worry because they had shown us how to be a family. We still hold our family reunions, just as we did when they were here. We get together at Christmas because that was daddy's birthday, and in April we gather because that is their wedding anniversary and mama's birthday. On July 4th we gather with both mama and daddy's families and have a big fish fry. In October we get together because that is when Grandpa Coll and Grandma Minnie's family get together, and on January 1st, mama's immediate family gathers. So we keep up with all our aunts and uncles and their families just as mama and daddy wanted us to."

"When mama and daddy's lawyer gathered us all together, he told us that in all his years of being an attorney he had never worked with a family that worked so hard to do what their parents told them to do," said Gail. "He said, 'You all have not bickered, raised your voice to each other and you have tried to divide everything equally, right down the middle to make sure everyone had an equal portion.'"

"I told him that we had to because mama was the type of person who took a candy bar and cut it equally in eight pieces so everybody had an equal portion, and I told him we were not only taught to share with each other, but people around us that needed it, too," said Dean.

"Mama and daddy said they didn't want us fighting over our inheritance. We settled the estate, the eight children and the attorney, and nobody got upset or squabbled over anything, and no one got their feelings hurt. We drew lots for the land and everyone got the

share they wanted. People might find that unbelievable, I guess, but it's true."

Today, the Brown children still own the property of their parents, and they gather there often. They are:

Nettie Ruth, a retired extension agent from St. Johns County who served as president of the National Association of Home Economics; Claudine, a retired educator in the Baker County School System from Macclenny; Betty, a school teacher in Newnan, Georgia; Marcus, who works for Clay Electric in Salt Springs; George, an optician who lives in Palm Bay, Marjorie a school teacher in Dothan, Alabama; and Athena Gail of Glen St. Mary who is principal of Westside Elementary. Ray, who is deceased, worked for Ford Motor Company. His children inherited his portion.

"George Marvin received the property with the house," said Gail. "He loves to be out at the farm, and he is so much like daddy. When he comes home, he walks the fence line and goes around the whole property checking everything out. He looks like daddy, the older he gets and he has so many characteristics like him. He comes home every other weekend and checks the farm. He plows and plants a garden, and we all still can and preserve the food just like we did when we all grew up. He intends to move back up here and live out there on the farm, on the portion that is his," she continued. "Since we all have an equal portion of the land, we hold joint ownership, but George Marvin is the one that probably has the deepest roots to it."

The children have paid homage to their parent's memory in a very positive way. At their father's death, the children founded the Ray Brown Forestry Scholarship at Lake City Community College in Lake City. When Athena died, they established a church library in The Lord's Church at Taylor in her honor.

Little has changed for the Browns on the land they inherited, except that both their parents have died, and now they are the older generation, setting examples and teaching their children and grandchildren about Grandpa Coll and Grandma Minnie, Grandma America Dinkins Raulerson and Grandpa Thomas Taylor.

"When the garden comes in, we do as mama did," said Dean. "We call everybody to come out for the harvest. For us, it is just like a

social event. We get the big wash tubs and sit out under the big sycamore trees and drink iced tea and shell peas.”

“We were all at the farm the other day,” said Gail. “Everyone was walking around and I looked over and saw George Marvin and Berry, Jr., across the field walking the fence line. Berry, Jr. looked so much like daddy, his arms and hands are built up like daddy. And George Marvin, too. I looked at them going across the field that afternoon and I thought, ‘Well, there they go, daddy’s son and grandson keeping up the tradition, checking out the fence line, and the garden, and looking to see how high the river is and wondering if there are any fish in it, and seeing if they can see any deer or turkey signs. I remember thinking as I looked at them walking across the field,’ Well, it’s going on, the tradition is still going on.’ “

DESCENDANTS OF JOHN ROLLISON/ROLLENSON/RAWLINSON/ROLYSON

JOHN ROLLISON/ROLLENSON/RAWLINSON, wife unknown

Known children: all born South Carolina are:

JACOB, born 26 Sept 1778 married (1) Nancy Baggs,(2) Courtney Stewart (3) Mary Ann Purdom

WILLIAM, born 1780 married Elizabeth Moore

FANNY, never married, five sons and three daughters (Alachua census 1830)

NOEL, believed to be the third husband of Eleanor Baggs West Brannen Raulerson

NIMROD, born 1795 married (1) Sarah Dukes (2) Nancy Roberson (See John Rolyson land plat, Effingham County, Ga. 1793

JACOB RAULERSON, son of John married **Nancy Baggs**

Children

NICHABOD, born 1799 Married 1) Lucretie Harris; 2) Margaret Motte; 3) Ellen Brill

ELIZABETH, born 1801 Married Theophilus Keen

HEROD, born 1803 Married Nancy Gibson

ELEANOR, born 1806 Married Millington Smith

SIDNAH, born 1810 Married Samuel M. Pearson

LENORIA, born 1813 Married Daniel Wilkinson

RUSSELL, born 1815 Married 1)Sarah Grooms; 2)Lydia Waldron; 3)Mary Taylor

HENRIETTA, born 1818 Married Abraham N. Knight

JAMES FORT, born 1821, born Ruth Hull

DAVID, born 1835 Married 1)Catherine Knoles; 2)Mary Dowling

NANCY, born 1836 Married Christopher Chancey. Married Courtney Stewart

ISABELLE, born 1833 Married Hillery Cason

MARY, born 1835 Married Alex G. Middleton

WADE H., born 1838 Married 1) Catherine Hart; 2)Agnes Norfleet. Married Mary Ann Purdom

WILLIAM RAULERSON of South Carolina born 1780 died 1858 in Baker Co.Fl. was son of John Rollenson/Rollison Rawlinson. Married **Elizabeth Moore**, born 1782 in Pitt Co., NC, died 1867 Lakeland, Fl., buried Gapway Cemetery Polk Co.,Fl. buried in Hull family row.

COUPLE'S CHILDREN

NOEL, born 1799

NEAL, born 1802

WILLIAM, born 1804

FRANCES 'FANNY,' born 1820, married James M. Albritton 14 Oct 1837.

EMILY, born 1817, died 5 Nov 1907, married Steven Hull, Sr. 13 June 1831.

WEST, born 23 Apr 1818, died 13 Feb 1887, married Elizabeth Canady

Note: Around 1840, at the time of Indian uprisings, there was a trail from West Florida to the Okefenokee Swamp that passed through the south end of Charlton County, Georgia. This made the Big Bend subject to frequent raids by the Indians. Wes Raulerson and 'Betty' Canaday were living with their children near this trail. While Wes was away from home in the woods working one day, Indians sneaked up and killed and scalped Betty and the older children. A little Black girl, who worked for the family, grabbed up the baby from its cradle, ran out the back door, and jumped down into a clay hole where clay had been dug

to make the chimney for the house. Weeds had grown up in and around this clay hole, making it an ideal hiding place. When the men came home from work they found the little Black girl and the baby the only survivors.

ISABEL, born 7 Jan 1827 , died 9 Nov 1882, married Jesse Johns

JACOB, born 1824 married Dora Ann

ELIZABETH, born 1835 never married, bore several children.

William is believed to have been buried in a field at an old deserted grave yard, long overgrown on what was known as the Henry Gainey Farm. It is now owned by Leonard Raulerson, son of Elizabeth and grandson of William. It is located south of Moniac on the St. Marys River, possible site of William's Ferry.

WESTBERRY RAULERSON born 23 April 1818 in Ware Co., died 13 Feb 1887 at Johnsville in Baker Co. Buried North Prong Cemetery, son of William and Elizabeth. Married on 5 Jan 1842 at Raulerson Ferry, **Elizabeth 'Betsy' Canady**, of Charlton Co.,Ga. died 15 Oct 1905 Baker Co., Fl. Dau of John M. Candy, Sr. and Missouri Powell, dau of Wm Powell and Polly Copinger and sister of Chief Osceola (Seminole).

COUPLE'S CHILDREN

MARTHA, born 1842 Baker County died 1869, md. Calvin Johns

JOHN MILLAGE, born Sept 1845, died 18 Mar 1922, married (1) Annie Johns. 2 children: James, born 1867, and Bessie, born 1869, married George Ellison.

John married (2) Serena Yarbrough. 11 Children: **1**—Martha, born 1872, married to John Yarbrough; **2**—Noah, born 1875, who married Malinda Rhoden; **3**—Margaret born 1877 married R.T. Thrift; **4**—William Owen, born 1879, **5**—Surina, born 1880, married Henry Gainey, **6**—Alice, born 1882, married John Reynolds, **7**—John H., born 1884, married Martha (Mattie) Crews.(9 children, **1**—Charles, married Genevieve Crawford; **2**—Nancy married Fed Privett, and they have two children, Gilbert and Horace; **3**—Lee, who married Elsie Smith, to whom were born Lee Jr. and Linda, **4**—Edna, married to Yulee Privett, with children Winona, Cecil and

Gene; 5–Eddie, married Ida Lee Smith; 6–Eva, who married Fred Geiger, and to them were born Thelma, Geanie, Fred, Glynn, Zemus, Lois and Walter; 7–Elvie, married Woodrow Sikes, and their children are Norma, Judy and Arlene; 8–O.D.; 9–Leila, married Marvin Johns, to whom were born John, Elaine and Susan). **8**–Dan, born 1886, married Lovie Johns; **9**–Annie, born 1888, married J.O. Phillips; **10**, Etta, born 1890, married Mose Raulerson; **11**– Ella, born 1894, married (1) Leo H. Dykes (2) Dr. E.W. Crockett, Sr.

WEST, JR., born 1850, married Louise Lamb/Lamp

JACK J. born 1854, married Louise Crawford

MICHAEL born 1856, married Emily Crews

HENRY born 1857

WILLIAM R. 'PINK' born 5 Jan 1858, died 6 Jan 1922, Married America Texas Dinkins.

SARAH J. born 1859, married Jack J. Newmans/Newmore on 7 Aug 1877.

MARGARET 'SIS' RAULERSON, married John Parker

JACKSON, born 1865 in Charlton Co., Ga. Married Lou Crawford

FRANCES, born 1867 in Charlton Co., Ga.

WILLIAM M. 'PINK' RAULERSON Born 6 Jan 1858 in Georgia, died 6 Jan 1922 in Baker County, Fl. Married **America Texas Dinkins** on 5 Nov 1879, born Sanderson, Baker, Fl. on 18 Dec 1861, daughter of Belone/Belona Dinkins and Melvina Texas Dopson, who never married. America was reared by Melvina and her husband Joseph Dinkins, brother to Belone)

COUPLE'S CHILDREN, all born Baxter, Baker, Fl.

Lillie, Born 30 Apr 1881, died 4 Nov 1919. Married Dennis D. Yarbrough on 23 Feb 1899. Lillie married 2nd. 11 Jan. 1913 Hugh B. Brown, born 7 July 1892 Baker County Florida, died 27 Nov. 1931.

Albert, Born 28 Jan 1883, died 3 Apr 1952 Married Amandy Ganey

Alonza, Born 1 Jan 1885, died 9 Oct 1950, Married Katie Fish

Mary, Born 10 June 1888, died 15 Sep 1963, Married Barney Crawford 10 June 1902

Arthur, Born 14 May 1892, died 29 Apr 1969, Married 1–Lizzie Johns and 2–Minnie Burnsed.

Walter, Born 2 Nov 1894, died 15 June 1934, Married Emma Connor 28 Feb 1915.

Orbie, Born 13 Mar 1897, died 5 Jan 1962, Married Mollie Crews 6 June 1919

Amy, Born 16 Dec 1889, died 11 Oct 1919, Married Will Powers

cealie, Born 24 Aug 1900, died 4 Jul 1918, Married Lonnie Sweat

Charles, Born 14 Feb 1902, died 27 Nov 1960

Lloyd, Born 23 Dec 1904, Died 22 Dec 1948, Married Mae G. Anderson

Gennary, Born 27 Apr 1908, died 27 Oct 1929, Married Candy Raulerson

Wilford, Born 27 Apr 1908, died 27 Feb 1968, Married Lizzie Raulerson

Additional information about the Raulerson–Brown families can be found in the Baker County Historical Society among the files and records of Virgil Raulerson and Cassie Dinkins, and the Knabb, Brown, Raulerson records of the late Lois Coleman and Paul Knabb, available in the Baker County Historical Society.

Turner Family of Baker County

"There is not a doctor in the county I live in. Any head of a family can take up to 160 acres of land and live upon it five years and then get a government title to it for about twenty dollars. Lands are worth here from 50 cents to five dollars per acre."

Charles Turner, Sanderson Florida, March 14, 1872

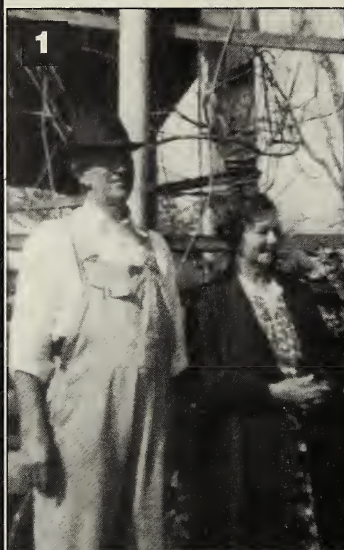
"Daddy used to serve on the jury and on those days he would walk home from the court house at noon to feed the chickens, and I remember all the other men on the jury would walk with him; then they'd go back to the Hotel Annie to eat dinner."

Iris J. Dixon

Many of the early Baker County settlers are gone now, even their posterity has vanished from the scene. The Turner family falls prey to this category except for one important thing: They left a vivid historical account of the time they lived here more than a century ago, and this is that story enhanced by some of their posterity who remember certain chapters in which they appear.

Charles Turner, and his wife Martha Fraker Turner, moved to Baker County in May of 1869. From then until his death in 1872, he kept a diary of his daily activities.

When he and his family left Memphis, Tennessee, they left behind an enterprising merchandise business, hoping the warm climate of Florida would improve Charles' ill health. They arrived the summer before the big freeze and hurricane that almost devastated Florida's crops. The couple was beginning to recover from the calamitous effects when Charles wrote a letter on March 14, 1872, from his prospering farm in Sanderson to his sister, Sarah E. Northway, living in Wisconsin. In part he penned:



- 1 Ernest Turner and his wife Gertrude Garrett Turner at home in Macclenny.**
- 2 Walter Monroe Turner (1856-1931) and his wife Lillian E. Sessions (1862-1929).**
- 3 Ernest Turner Home-South Macclenny.**
- 4 Inez Turner, daughter of Ernest Vasco Turner, Sr. and Gertrude Garrett.**
- 5 Vasco Turner with his sister Iris Turner (Diez) 1926.**
- 6 Iris Turner Diez.**

"We left Memphis, Tenn., in May 1869, arriving in Jacksonville in four days railroad travel. I went to keeping house in Jacksonville as soon as we arrived there and I commenced scouting about the country to find a place in Baker Co., Fla., where I am now living. I have a farm of 160 acres and about 30 acres under cultivation. I have about 500 peach trees and about 300 of them bearing; have 55 apple trees four years old, have one 10 year(s) old and bearing good apples. I have 6 orange trees that have been bearing about 9 years, also have 50 young ones now three and four years old, also have 20 pecan trees 2 years old. Also, lots of banana plants. I have some ripe oranges now upon my trees; the same trees are now blooming. I have two acres of sugar cane planted, have ten acres of oats now up six inches high; they will be ready to harvest by the first of May. I have just finished planting twelve acres of corn; some of my corn is up. Have two acres sweet potatoes also planted. My garden is nearly all planted and some things up. I have green peas in bloom, also some pods two inches long. I had new radishes today for dinner. We have had good white head cabbage standing in our garden all winter, also turnips and rutabagas. I have beans up, watermelon and muskmelons planted last week. The Irish potatoes are a foot high. Last year I had new Irish potatoes on the last day of March. I have tomato plants now about big enough to set out. I have planted cucumbers last week, also butter beans, and various other garden seeds, etc. We are living in a log house; also my stable, crib, chicken house, smoke house and all other buildings are of logs. I have one house worth \$250, about 25 head of hogs, and lots of chickens, etc. Our hogs are never fed in the country until we wish to take them up to fatten them. They get their living in the woods. Hogs here are worth about two to four dollars per head, cattle about \$7 to \$8 per head. The section of country I live in is flat pine woods country generally poor land, but the best of water and the best of health. There are many parts of Florida much more inviting than this, such as better land, better opportunities, but not as good health. I cannot say that I am satisfied with the country, but I would not live in those cold frozen countries now for a thousand dollars a year. I shall perhaps spend the balance of my life in Florida. I am Postmaster of Sanderson and yet live eight miles from that town. I

have a deputy postmaster appointed who attends to the business for me, etc. I have been living upon this place now over two years. I raise my own rice, make my own sugar and syrup, also some of the same to sell. I sold over two hundred fifty dollars worth of peaches last year and will perhaps sell more this year. I also sell large quantities of sweet potatoes, chickens, eggs, etc. We have no oranges to sell, we use all we can raise at present. This farming business is rather hard on me after spending most of my life merchandising, but I guess I shall have to stick to it until I can do better. This country has been much over rated by enthusiastic writers. It is undoubtedly the finest climate I have ever lived in but I cannot agree that it is so very beautiful in its landscape, scenery, etc. I would, as you say, like very much to be near you so we could visit each other's families. We have seen very little of each other during our lives. I would be very glad to pay you a visit but money is too scarce with me now. If you are healthy and doing well I should not advise you to break up a good home to find a better one. There are a great many who come here, become very much dissatisfied because the country does not come up to the big pictures that people have had of it, but if you or anyone else are losing your health by the cold winters, they certainly can escape that in this country besides regaining their health. There is not a doctor in the country I live in. Any head of a family can take up 160 acres of land and live upon it five years and then get a government title to it for about twenty dollars. Lands are worth here from 50 cents to five dollars per acre. My place cost me \$800. There are plenty other places here for sale cheap, so if any of your Onondaga folks come down here, tell them to come see me, etc.

"My wife and children send their love to you and your husband and your children, their aunt, uncle and cousins, etc. With love to yourself and the kindest regard for your husband and my little niece and nephew, I am Truly your Brother.

C.W. Turner"

Martha Turner enclosed a note to her sister-in-law, mailed with Charles' letter. In part it read:

"Dear Sister Sarah,

"It is very different from our home in Memphis; it is true we have some advantages here, but a great many disadvantages, but I

suppose we must not expect everything perfect; our winters here are delightful, we are all alone here among strangers, we have no relatives or people that are more enlightened; the people here are very kind, but they don't know much. We don't have good schools here like we did in Memphis; we have some churches but they are all Methodist. Our children were very lonely when we first came here for things are so different from what they had been accustomed to, but they have got used to it by now. The children often wish they could see his cousins. I wish myself I could see you all but we are so far apart I don't expect ever to see you all. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain yours, Martha Turner"

In the big freeze and hurricane of 1870, Charles and Martha were hit very badly. Charlie's nephew, Charlie Bell, had planned to live with his uncle after his mother, Abigail Turner Bell Rundell, died, but was discouraged by the big freeze. After writing this letter in March, Charles suffered a bowel stoppage in June and died the 13th of June of the same year, 1872. Nothing more was heard from the Baker County branch of the Turner family for 100 years until the above letter was discovered by a Turner family historian. She wrote the Sanderson postmaster in 1972 who put her in touch with some of the Turner family members who had remained in Baker County.

When Charles and Martha Turner moved to Baker County in 1869, he was 44 years old. He had chronic bronchitis, chronic dyspepsia, and chronic neuralgia of the limbs, mentioned in the letter to his sister Sarah. His wife, Martha, he wrote, was 33 years old, and, "in good health." He wrote his sister that he and his wife had six children; the oldest, he disclosed, "is Walter, who is a stout boy now sixteen years old. Our second child is a daughter named Irene, 14 years old; our next is a boy named Edgar, 12 years old, our next is a boy named Charley 2 1/2 years old." Charles also wrote his sister that two other children died—a boy named Arthur, in 1863, and a girl named Serena, in 1866.

When the big freeze and hurricane of 1870 destroyed all his crops, Charles' diary revealed that, "We had to live on Indian meal, bread, pork and fruit."

Before coming to Baker County, Charles had an interesting life. He was born in Durhamville, Oneida County, New York, about 1828, the son of Eli and Lorena (Sowle) Turner.

Charles' mother died when he was seven years of age. He left home sometime after 1840 and worked in New York City for awhile, then lived in Michigan and Wisconsin. He was a soldier in the U.S. Army at Fort Gibson in the Cherokee Nation. He left on July 17, 1848, marching to California via Santa Fe, New Mexico. His diary told of hunting buffalo and small game, seeing wild horses, and of Indians stealing their horses from camp one night. His group arrived in Santa Fe on the 12th of September after 56 days of travel. Upon arrival they were informed that peace had been declared with Mexico and their services were no longer needed. He was given a warrant for 160 acres of land on March 21, 1850. He served three years in the service.

Charles was in St. Louis in 1853, and in Memphis on 6 June 1862 when he said he saw the great gunboat battle there. He said that he, his father and his grandfather had all "stood on the bloody fields of war in defence of our glorious union."

After his service was completed, Charles worked in a drug store (and later owned his own), in Memphis. He married Martha Fraker, a girl he met in Blackhawk. Martha and her parents had emigrated from Holland, but she had been orphaned at an early age. A wealthy couple adopted her and provided an excellent education and piano training. The couple moved from Memphis to Florida, where he was often referred to as "doctor," which title most likely came from his knowledge as a druggist in Tennessee.

Charles is buried in what was a family cemetery in Margaretta, at Mt. Sion Church near Sanderson. The old cemetery grew up with weeds and was finally obliterated. Other members of the family, including Charles' wife, Martha, are buried in Woodlawn Cemetery south of Macclenny. He left each of his children \$1,000. Edgar Turner gave his money to his mother and went to work.

After Charles' death, Martha married a man whose last name was Mott. The couple had one daughter, Cora.

Charles and Martha's oldest son, Walter, was postmaster in Macclenny for 18 years. Their daughter, Irene, married George Baldwin

of Jacksonville. Edgar Turner was a buyer for a very large firm called Eppinger and Russell and later became an insurance agent, representing New York Life and Equitable Life Insurance companies.

When Charles died, his oldest son, Walter Monroe Turner, was only 15 years old. It is not known what he did after his father's death, but on August 25, 1878, he married Lillian Elizabeth Sessions, the daughter of a Methodist Minister. He is said to have called his bride his little southern belle. He was running a sawmill and laboring in cabinet work. Soon after his marriage he began construction on his own eight-room home, doing much of the work by lantern light after leaving his regular job. Later he added four additional rooms and the house stood for many years.

Walter, born 1856, and Lillian, born 1862, reared four sons and two daughters in Baker County. Walter taught Bible Class in the Baptist Church in the morning and in the Methodist Church in the afternoon. He donated the lumber to build the First Methodist Church in Macclenny. He built a church on the back of his property for the black people in the community. He was known as a Good Samaritan throughout the area. His widowed sister-in-law, Ina Williams, and her three children were given a home with the Turners and later, Walter financed her in business. He also took in the wife and child of the family physician, Dr. Curtis, when the physician died.

He served as president and state representative of Baker County League of Postmasters, and because of his interest in politics he served on the State Committee of the Republican Party of Florida. When news of Lillian Turner's death, on July 2, 1929, reached headquarters of the Florida Republican Party, which was in session in Lakeland, Fl., the State Committee, upon reading her name on roll call, rose to their feet in honor of her memory and sent Walter a letter of condolence.

He served as the census recorder in the Macclenny district and urged people to vote, by teaching them how.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt became president, he turned over the postmastership of Macclenny to his son, Ernest V. Turner, a Democrat, who held the position for several years.

In 1916, Walter, his wife, Lillian, and daughter, Neva, moved to Starke where three of the couple's children were living. They later

moved to Jacksonville, then back to Macclenny, where Lillian died July 2, 1929. Walter lived until June 3, 1931.

Before her death, Neva Turner Dean gave the following account of her brothers and sisters.

Ulphian Gray Turner received a college degree and went on to dental school, receiving his diploma and practicing in Starke and Jacksonville. His son, Ulphian Gray Jr. became a dental technician and assisted his father.

Ernest Vasco Turner lived in Macclenny most of his life. He graduated from college and was postmaster of Macclenny Post Office for many years.

Evelyn Serena Turner graduated from State College for Women in Tallahassee, then married James Wester and assisted him with office and commissary work on Griffins Nursery, where James was part-owner and manager.

Frank Leslie Turner attended pharmaceutical college and after graduation assisted his uncle in his drug store in Starke, later becoming a pharmacist at two drug stores in Jacksonville. He was very active as a Shriner.

Rodney Powell Turner attended Massey Business College in Jacksonville after graduation. He then joined the U.S. Army and served in France during World War I, having a desire to tell his grandchildren his war stories. After his discharge, his career was with Southern Bell Telephone Company where he was right-of-way engineer for many years. He was an active Shriner. His son, **Rodney Powell Turner, Jr.** enlisted in the Army after graduation and became a pilot. He did foreign service in Italy and Germany, taking his wife, Elaine, and daughters, Michelle and Sharon, with him.. Later he went to Vietnam, where he was shot down in a helicopter and lost a foot. He remained with the service, retiring as a major.

Neva Celebes Dean, an accomplished pianist, attended school in Macclenny and Starke. During WW II, she worked in the U.S. Post Office at the Norfolk Naval Base in Norfolk, Va., later teaching pre-school children at Ben Morrell Naval Reservation. She was active in civic work, receiving the honor of "Woman of the Week" by Radio Station WNOR in December 10, 1950, for her work with underprivileged children. She held office in Eastern Star in Norfolk, and other civic club offices in Eau Gallie.

Ernest Vasco Turner, Sr. was born May 27, 1882 in Baker County. As did his father and grandfather before him, he served the county as postmaster. He and his wife, Gertrude Garrett, daughter of George Garrett, had five children: Vesta May, Ernest Vasco, Jr., Elizabeth (Long), Lillian (Bullard) and Iris Amba (Diaz).

In 1994, Iris, the only living family member, gave this account of her family who lived in a large, rambling 11-room frame home south of Macclenny.

"I was the youngest of my parent's children," she began. "My sister, Lillian, was 13 years old when I was born on November 30, 1926 and the only one of their children still living at home. Vesta May, Ernest, and Elizabeth had already married and moved away. I weighed only one and a half pounds when Dr. E.W. Crockett delivered me, and even though they took me to physicians in Jacksonville, I was not expected to live. An old negro nanny kept me alive. As she sat in a rocker in front of our fireplace, she held me on her breast to keep me warm, and fed me with an eye-dropper," she said.

Iris lived in her parents' spacious home with its full-length porch. It had two front doors, one leading to a bedroom, the other a living room.

"We spent our time around the fireplace in the sitting room," she said. "We never used the living room. We used mantle lamps for light, and the fireplace for heat.

"I could hear the first school bell ring and I'd take off through the field, that's how close we lived. Fay Milton was my first-grade teacher. At the time, the area in front of the Poythress house was nothing but a swamp, and now houses are everywhere," she noted. "The area in front of our house was beautifully landscaped, something like a park, and we had lots of parties and gatherings there.

"My father was a kind and gentle person. He had light brown hair and was of medium build. Mother, pretty with dark hair, was handicapped, and someone told me later she had a stroke, but she died in 1942 at the age of 56. We always had someone that cooked and cleaned house for us," she said.

"About the only thing we had for recreation in those days was to spend time at Power's Drug Store downtown, buying a soda, lime

sour, or cherry coke and sitting around the glass top tables that had displays of perfume like *Evening In Paris* under them. My best friends in those days were Anita Gilbert, Erin Poythress, Geraldine Brown, Betty Holt, Reba Elliott, and Bernice Knabb. Sometimes we'd all walk down the railroad tracks to the trestle to swim; never even thought about a life guard back then. There wasn't too many boys left in the county when I graduated in 1945, they had all left for the war," she continued. "We had a movie theater, I remember the whites sat downstairs and the blacks upstairs. Every Saturday we saw a serial starring Buck Rogers."

When Iris was six years old the *Baker County Press* reported that she celebrated with a number of her little friends, playing games and enjoying a cake with six candles; in addition, each guest had an individual cake with a candle which was served with ice cream. Present were: Sara, Luta and Erin Poythress, Lillian and Geraldine Brown, Anita Gilbert, Yvonne Blair, Cora and Betty Rye, Betty Jones, Gloria and Carolyn Wolfe and Reva Elliott.

"Daddy used to serve on the jury and on those days he would walk home from the court house at noon to feed the chickens, and I remember all the other men on the jury would walk with him, then they'd go back to the Hotel Annie to eat dinner. Back then, the Hotel Annie and adjoining Power's Drug Store had ceiling fans -- no one had air-conditioning.

"In fact, we didn't have electricity for a long time, but when we finally got it we had an indoor bathroom added and it was a long time before daddy would even use it, he just wasn't used to it."

The post office was located at the corner of Fourth and Beaver Street, she said.

"We didn't refer to Main Street or Macclenny Avenue as such then, we called it Beaver Street. I remember that on Sundays, we'd all walk down to the post office to get our mail from the mail box. And lots of times I'd walk up town to just get a loaf of bread; we didn't think anything about it then," she recalled.

Once, when she was walking past the county courthouse in 1938 on her way to the movie with a friend, they witnessed one of the county's greatest tragedies.

"It was the evening that former Sheriff Shannon Green was shot and killed. We were scared to death," she said.

She remembers being flower girl in her sister Elizabeth's wedding, held in the same Methodist Church that her grandfather had purchased the lumber for before she was born. The wedding was said to have been the largest ever held in the county at that time.

She graduated with a class of 22 from Macclenny High School. *The Baker County Press* reported on May 8, 1945, that, "This has been the most successful war-time session we have had. The enrollment is steadily increasing. Pupils are realizing more than ever the need of a high school education. Teachers are planning to go to summer schools to equip themselves with more knowledge to carry-out their duties."

She left home after graduation in 1945 to seek employment in Jacksonville. She was dating a boy who later was killed while serving in the Navy. She subsequently married his brother, Afton Rawls. The union gave them a daughter, Mickey. Later, the marriage dissolved and she married Irving E. Diaz and the couple had four daughters, Fredericka (Ricki), Victoria (Vicki), Carol and Belinda. They live within a 50-mile radius of their parents' Maxville home.

Gone are the days of Ring-Around-The Roses, Hide-And-Go-Seek, Kick The Can and Red Rover -- innocent games played as a child with neighbor children or with cousins when her brothers and sister would all return home to gather with her parents for a big Sunday dinner.

Gone is her father, whose last days were spent in ill health, and gone is the family's rambling home and the days of sitting around the glass top tables at Powers Drugs sipping cherry cokes and lime sours.

Gone also are the Turner family descendants from Baker County, although Inez Turner Diaz lives just a short distance away in Maxwell. They have left behind those who immigrated here and those who were born here and now lie beneath the sod at Woodlawn Cemetery, south of town.

But the Turner legacy lives on and is remembered by those who live away. Some have made prominent names for themselves, like Lillian Turner Bullard's son, Fred, who owned the celebrated Jacksonville Bulls Football team and his own golf course in Queens Harbor.

Harold Albritton Turner (1900), who is the son of Edgar Turner (1860) and Ruby Rowe of Baker County, served two one-year terms as mayor of Boca Raton, Florida, and served for seven years on the City Council and as vice chairman of Palm Beach County School Board for one four-year term. Their son, Bernard Edward Turner, became the mayor of Boca Raton after serving in the Navy in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

Ernest Vasco III, of Bay Village, Ohio, fell heir to the treasured Charles W. Turner diary and shared portions of it for this contribution on the Turner Family of Baker County.

"Through the diary and other family records, we want to leave the Turner legacy, at least in part, to our children and their children," said Iris. "We want them to remember that our family's heritage is in Baker County, and that although our work and marriages have taken us away, our history and roots spread across the Baker County soil. Our forefathers are buried in Baker County, and it will always be the place we call home," she said.

Although Charles Turner began writing his diary on December 31, 1867, when he resided at 36 Avery St., Memphis, Tenn., he continued daily entries as he moved to Baker County in 1869. When he began his diary he wrote: "A record of events and occurrences within the knowledge and observations of C.W. Turner commencing January 1st 1869. Believing it to be a duty encumbered upon myself, for future reference for all who it may concern, I am determined to keep a record of such events as may appear worthy of preserving."

Most of his entries are not included in this account, but have been placed in the Baker County Historical Society for further examination. Here is a sampling, with wording and spelling exactly as he penned it:

Wednesday, January 1st, 1868—Memphis, Tennessee

The year 1868 is ushered in upon us with a prospective eventful future. The inevitable voice of the times is Political, Social and Commercial Revolution. The late unfortunate war has thrown to the surface of the Political Cauldron a hoard of Incarnate Vultures who

seem determined to pause nothing short of a Robespeiren(sic) Fame. The social; dependent much upon the Political Condition, And indebted largely to the Myrides of Mushroom and Fungus, Lawgivers (now too numerous here) is indeed in a deplorable condition. Men who in former years clamoring high toned respectability who now are ready to: and daily offer themselves as social equals to the lowest grade of a Congo Robber for the consideration of a "Vote" To place in power one who with unblushing shame slanders people and state. The commercial interest under the hampered control of such legislative Powers are fast and daily drifting into irredeemable Bankruptcy. These with other uninviting prospects are in the Foreground of the incoming year, Hoping however that time may meet out to us a better fate than the prospectus showing we commend ourselves to the sovereign will for our deliverance.

Unusual for this latitude there is in Memphis today 6 inches of snow, enshrouding the earth and house tops. The weather is mild and snow Thawing Thermometer 40 at 12 o'clock. C.W. Turner slightly indisposed and at home 36 Avery St. all day. Balance family well. Mr. James MacDonald called today. Jefferson Davis and wife arrived at New Orleans today. Steamer Henry Aimes lost both guards loaded with cotton and killing and drowning twenty persons at N.O. Gold \$1.33. City Scrip 35 cents. County Scrip 65 cents. Cotton 13 1/2 cents, Bacon 14 c, Butter 40 c, Corn 75 c, Coffee 25 c, Eggs 38 c, Flour \$8 to \$15, Oats 80 c, Potatoes \$4, Sugar 17c.

Thursday, January 2d. 1868

This is the day of the Municipal Election for Mayor, Tax Collector, Wharf Master, Aldermen and school visitors, the Election passed off very quietly.

C.W. Turner Age 40 years

Martha Turner age 30 years

Walter Turner age 12 years

Irene Turner age 10 years

Edger Turner age 8 years

Until his arrival in Baker County, Charles Turner continued to write extensively, commenting passionately about politics, stocks and prices of goods. He refers to himself as CWT. He records news accounts of other areas of the U.S.

Friday, January 1, 1869

CWT and Family all well. A year of prosperity has past and remembered with the things that were. And a new year has dawned with hopes and prospects of brighter seasons and one or more propitious circumstance. It is to be hoped that our nation as a people will with renewed energy and determination pull forth all of their combined talent and energies to the development and promotion of peace and prosperity. Hoping for the best we commend ourselves to the Almighty Spirit for guidance.

Friday, March 5th, 1869

CWT and Family well. The inauguration ceremonies passed off quickly and hugely on yesterday in Washington. The President elect and the retiring President both have so much of the mule in themselves that they cannot meet each other in the ceremonies as is usual with other Presidents on similar occasions. This is a crying disgrace on a free enlightened and intelligent republican government and an example that Bullies and prize-fighters would ignore.

Saturday, March 6, 1869

President Grant has appointed his Cabinet; E.B. Washburn, Secy of State, A.F. Stewart, the New York merchant prince for Secy of Treasury; General Schofield, Secy of War; Adolf Boric, a wealthy Philadelphia mer-

chant for Secretary of Navy; ex Gov. Cox of Ohio, Secy of Interior; Judge Hevar of Neals, Atty General; A.T. Cripwell of Maryland, Post Master General.

Sunday, March 7th, 1869

CWT and Family well. Weather cold, freezing hard. At an election held yesterday for County Commissioner there was a Negro by name of Ed Shaw elected for County Commissioner. The Negro is a gambler and an unprincipled rake and notorious Scamp.

Saturday, May 1st, 1869

CWT has sold out and will move to Florida in a few days. Sent some furniture to auction today.

Sunday, May 2nd, 1869

We are at work today, packing up our trunks and boxes, preparatory to leave our old homestead forever. The attachment is hard to sever, but we think interest demands that we make this sacrifice and go to another State, Florida is our destination.

Monday, May 3rd, 1869

We are today sending our furniture to Miss Royston and Tresevant auction house for sale. Preparatory to taking our final leave of our dear old homestead at No. 36 Avery Street, Memphis, Tennessee. At 3 o'clock p.m. we bid last adieu to our old home where many days of comfort and pleasure have occurred, also seems of distress and trouble

Sunday, May 4th, 1869

Today all of my furniture was sold by Royston and Tresevant. Net proceeds \$234. We bid all friends adieu and left the City of Memphis at 11:30 a.m. for Jacksonville, Florida.

Tuesday, May 6, 1869

We are on the cars on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad at 4 o'clock a.m. at Grand Junction. Remained there 1 hour in the cars, then took off for Huntsville. Arrived there at 12 noon. Had our dinner on the cars from a supply carried in our basket. After dinner we were off for Chatanonga arrived there at 7 o'clock p.m. where we took sleeping car for Atlanta. Did not sleep but past a terrible night with Neurology arrived at Atlanta at 3 o'clock a.m. on the 7th.

Wednesday, May 7, 1869

Eat our breakfast at 7 o'clock a.m. from our store of provisions in our basket. Left Atlanta at 8 o'clock p.m. on 7th. took dinner at the Byington House, also took room and tried to sleep until 6 o'clock p.m. We then left for Savannah, Georgia arriving that place at 5 o'clock a.m. on 8th May.

Saturday, May 8th, 1869

CWT and Family all well and at the Screnner house took breakfast. Cost \$5 for our omnibus fare from R.R. to hotel and from hotel to R.R. again one of the most exorbitant charges I ever paid for such service. Left Savannah for Jacksonville at 7 o'clock a.m. today. We travelled through a flat pone country, sparsely settled, occasionally swamps and marshes also small lakes and ponds covered with white pond lilies, arrived at Jacksonville at 10 o'clock p.m. and quite cold. Stopped at the Price house, took a good warming by a fine knot fire and then we all went to bed and slept without waking.

Sunday, May 9th, 1869

At Jacksonville Florida and all well and some rested from our long and fatiguing trip. today we relished breakfast better than we had for a year, after breakfast took a stroll around the town to see the sights the City

looks in a better condition than I had expected. After dinner wrote some letters to Memphis Tenn.

Monday, May 10th, 1869

Left Price house today to board with Mrs. Haden on Pine Street. Our board is to cost \$26 per week for self, wife and three children.

From May 10 until July 1st, C.W.T. became engrossed in exploration and being away from home and made entries of his trips up and down the area rivers by boat, giving daily temperatures and battling "thousands of mesquites and sand flies."

In one entry, he wrote, "When we were passing Hibernia I was attacked with a severe chill which was the most severe I ever had lasting about 9 hours. This was the most severe chill of sickness I have had in 15 years. We arrived at Jacksonville at 10 o'clock p.m. on the eighth day fully disgusted with the beauties of the St. John River and its tributaries. Arriving home I found my dear daughter, Irene, nearly at the point of death with fever having been very sick and under the care of Dr. Wakefield" (He writes in detail as each family member comes down with the chills and fever).

The family moved to Monroe Street, one door east of Mayor Hopkins' residence. By November 1st, the family had moved to a farm in Baker County. He wrote, "And being now anchored for some time and perhaps for life, will keep a more correct diary."

Continuing with his chronicle of events after January 1, 1870, he writes:

"I made several visits to this place in Baker County, trying to locate myself and finally agreed to take 160 acres a half-mile square on the south side of the railroad track. I then went to Jacksonville, hired a hand to work and bought provisions. Went out on the 1st November to begin to open a new place in the pine woods, but after 2 days' survey and contemplation, I came to the conclusion that I had too much of an elephant and concluded to get rid of him. I therefore hired out my Negro man, Moses, to Mr. Coan and left for

Jacksonville to make a compromise with Mr. Williams. I did so very satisfactory to myself and immediately went to Barnett's camp in Baker County and bought up Mr. Barnett's agent for r. Smith, his farm of 160 acres located in sections 1 and 2, 11 and 12, townships 3, range 22. Being the old Gigen and Mott place about 24 miles east of Sanderson and 1 mile south of the railroad and on the west bank of the south St. Mary's River. It is an old improved place containing 160 acres and 50 under fence, having 100 bearing peach trees, also 10 orange trees, all bearing. Besides 6 quince, 6 fig, 5 pomegranate, bananas, apricot and various other plants and trees. A good lag house and corn crib, both mostly new. Also has stables, a negro cabin, chicken house, smoke house, all old but liveable for present use. After buying the above place, I immediately made preparations to move to it, which I did arriving on Sunday 5, December 1869. After we had got located in our new quarters, we got up a rough country dinner which my wife cooked by the fireplace. Entirely a new program for her having for the last 15 years cooked on a stove with all the modern improvements and conveniences and it may well be supposed that the old fashioned bake oven and frying pan before a hot pine fire was rather novel as well as disagreeable. We all slept well without racking on our first night in the pine woods log house, December 6, 1869.

Got up somewhat refreshed and put on our hickory shirt and pants. Pulled on our coat and went to work as a farmer. The first I found to do was clearing up some ground to plant 1 acre of sugar cane. Our negro man as a hand with the axe and myself and Walter and Edgar as another hand hauling the wood off the ground and burning the rubbish as the other hand of the place. I had forgot that we had bought a good grey horse which cost \$160 and we have named him Billy. He makes the third had on the place. My wife and daughter Irene in

the house with our little baby Charlie which I had also forgot to mention had been born to us on the 19th of September 1869, and were the indoor inmates of our house. Also Moses' wife Mariah in the yard to do the rough work of the household. We got along as well as could be expected ...in an old place in a strange land and took our Christmas dinner on roast chicken and chicken stew at home and bade goodbye to the old year on December 31st, 1869.

Saturday, January 1st 1870

We have already planted 1 acre sugar cane, some clover, greens, peas, lettuce, mustard, radish, onion. have had about 1,000 rails split and planted various trees and plants and flowers including 8 lemon trees.

January 5, 1870

24 degrees, coldest night of season. This day C.W.T.went to Williamsburg and bought off of Miss Coan 1 sow with 9 pigs for \$20. Called on Mrs. Townsend. Had some difficulty bringing our Billy horse home with the pig music behind him in the cart. On arriving home at about 3 o'clock, found the woods all on fire on the west and north of our farm and our boys and Mose out fighting fire in the grass. After putting the pigs and sow in the pen and Billy in the stable I started for the fire and found the grass on fire for about 1/2 miles in length on the west and north of my place and before sundown we had it all put out. Mose stayed all night to watch the fireline.

Thursday, January 6, 1870

We are building fence today on the west side of my place. The fire broke out again today and Walter and myself went to put it out and had it not been for the timely arrival of Mose the fire would have destroyed the timbers on the west part of my

land. Planted some more Irish potatoes today. Eight rows with salt and lime and muck manure over them.

Monday, January 10, 1870

C.W.T. went to Mr. W.J. Barrett's to get deed from Leo J. Smith to C.W. Turner for present homestead. Mr. Barrett at his log wharf. We both went to Mr. Richard Mott's house to see the deed given by Gigger to Mott. Returned to Mr. Barrett's took tea, paid \$800 in green-back to Mr. W.J. Barrett's agent for Leo J. Smith and Mary S. Smith for my present homestead of 160 acres land and received deed from Smith and Mr. B. CWT quite sick all night with neurology.

Additional entries told of visitors: Mrs. Berry and Isaac Mann, the Barrett's, Mr. Richard Mott and wife, Penny Barber. He planted more fruit trees including 50 apple (Red Astracahan, Carolina Watson, Early Harvest, Homney, Julian, Leake and Sweet Bough).

Monday, January 31, 1870

CWT went to Sanderson today. Got barrel syrup from Mr. Ponce, also got my deed to my place recorded today. Received the first numbers of my rural New Yorker for this year's subscription. Received bundle of corn, beans and grass seed from Mrs. Aimes of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Monday, February 14, 1870

CWT ploughed all day. Mr. Jackson Mann called today for medicine for his wife.

Saturday, February 19, 1870

Hard freeze last night, ice and horse trough 1/2 inch thick. Woods all on fire north of my place. CWT made fires around the peach trees to protect them from

freeze. CWT at work building railing fence and fighting fire. The whole east front of my land burnt over today. Mrs. Fox came to work today at \$14 per month and board. Mr. Dobson and Sam Williams finished splitting 2000 railings today for which I paid them #10 in currency.

Sunday, February 20, 1870

Irene some sick with cold. CWT, wife and Irene went to visit Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, also Mr. and Mrs. Jackson Mann.

On February 26th CWT hired Alex Lea to grub up and lawn a piece of ground in front of the lot gate, on Feb 26 he discharged Fox and paid him \$3.25 in cash and 2 plugs tobacco. On March 10 he reports his fruit trees almost all destroyed in freeze, he replants on March 12 and reported a Mrs. Green called to get medicine for Mrs. Johnson, he is continuous planting a variety of fruits and vegetables, 15 sacks of corn arrive from Jacksonville and put off the cars in the rain and mud by conductor and caused damage to it. He hauled it home and spread it on crib floor. bought setting hens, Mr. Mann marked his pigs on March 26 with an underbit in the right ear, a hen named rough and ready hatched 13 chickens on March 27

-- He continues to prescribe medicine for citizens, he continues to report himself as "not well.". Diary transcribed up to May 6, 1870. Remainder of diary in possession of Ernest Turner, a grandson of Charles, in Cleveland, Ohio, who is in the process of completing the typed copy.

CWT died June 13, 1872 after a severe illness of two weeks duration. Dr. P.A. Holt of Lake City attended him and pronounced death due to inflammation of stomach and bowels. He was buried at the Mount Sion Church House, about one and one half miles east of Mr. B.H. Gurganuses' place. Reverend T.R. Burnett officiated in the funeral services. Martha Fraker Turner married a man named Mott and they had one daughter, Cora, who had two daughters: Mamie and Lillian.

In regard to Charles Turner, his grandson, Harold Albritton Turner wrote that his grandfather was the first doctor in Baker County.

He didn't know how the 'Doctor' came about unless he was a pharmacist in the army or because he sold drugs in his store in Memphis. Charles' son, Walter, reported to Harold Albritton that Charles had first married a Mexican girl who died when their first baby was born. He left the baby with its maternal grandmother and started to return home to Syracuse but only got as far as Blackhawk, Miss, then to Memphis where he worked in a drugstore and later operated his own store.

BAKER COUNTY TURNER FAMILY GENEALOGY

- 1. Jonathan Turner
- 2. Eli Turner m. 1) Lorena Soule
Mayflower line
- 3. CHARLES TURNER

CHARLES TURNER came to Baker County in May of 1869 with his wife, Martha Fraker (1839–1895). They are the parents of six children.

- CHILDREN:
- 1 Walter Monroe Turner
 - 2 Irene Turner (Baldwin)
 - 3 Edgar Wesley Turner
 - 4 Arthur Turner
 - 5 Serena Turner
 - 6 Charles Turner

1–**WALTER MONROE TURNER** was born 1 Nov 1856, died 3 July 1931. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery with his wife.

Married **Lillian Elizabeth Sessions** born 25 Apr 1862, died 2 July 1929.

- 7 Ulphian Gray Turner
- 8 Ernest Vasco Turner
- 9 Evelyn Serena Turner
- 10 Frank Leslie Turner
- 11 Rodney Powell Turner
- 12 Neva Celebes Turner

2 **IRENE TURNER** Born 11 Nov 1858, Buried Macclenny, Fl.
Married George Baldwin

- 13 Ada Baldwin
- 14 James Baldwin

3 **EDGAR TURNER** Born Sept. 1860, Died 1921, Buried Macclenny,Fl.
Married Mississippi Lyons Born 23 Nov 1866, Died 29 May 1952

- 15 Winifred Turner
- 16 Effie May Turner (Horne)
- 17 Harold Albritton Turner

4 **ARTHUR TURNER** Died 1863 as infant

5 **SERENA TURNER** Died 1866 as infant

6 **CHARLES TURNER** Born 1869, married Lizzy, Buried Macclenny,Fl.

7 **ULPHIAN GRAY TURNER** Born 1 Jan 1880, Died 21 Sept 1952
Married Ada Edwards

- 18 Ulphian Gray Turner
- 19 Daniel Walter Turner

8 **ERNEST VASCO TURNER** Born 27 May 1882, Died Sept. 1960
Married Gertrude Garrett

- 20 Vesta May Turner
- 21 Ernest Vasco Turner
- 22 Elizabeth Turner (Long)
- 23 Lillian Turner (Bullard)
- 24 Iris Amba Turner (Diaz)

9 **EVELYN SERENA TURNER** Born 27 May 1887, Died 7 Dec 1970
Married James Wester

- 25 Oleta Wester (Huffman)
- 26 Marylee Wester (Tanner)
- 27 Barbara Wester (Davis)

10 **FRANK LESLIE TURNER** Born 11 Aug 1890, Died 16 July 1960
Married 1-Lillian Cason (no children)
2-Hitty Weeks

- 11 **RODNEY POWELL TURNER** Born 22 Feb 1896, Died 22 July 1956
 Married 1–Lecie Sheron
 2–Edna Gray
 28 Rodney Turner, Jr. (Son of Lecie)
 29 Neva Dean Turner (Daughter of Edna)
- 12 **NEVA CELEBES TURNER** Born 11 Apr 1898
 Married Roy W. Dean, retired executive of Ford Motor Company
 Residents of Eau Gallie, Fl.
- 13 **ADA BALDWIN** Born 1887
- 14 **JAMES BALDWIN** Born 1894 Lived in Jacksonville, Fl.
 Married Edna
 30 Edna Baldwin
 31 Barbara Baldwin
- 15 **WINIFRED TURNER** Buried Macclenny, Fl.
- 16 **EFFIE MAY TURNER** Born 11 July 1883, Died 2 Jan 1950
 Married Frank S. Horne Born 22 Jan 1882, Died 27 Apr 1934
 32 Janice Mae Horne (Wright)
 33 Winifred harriet Horne (Merritt)
 34 Frank Slatten Horne
 35 Sarah Suzanne Horne (Yarbrough)
 36 Louise Turner Horne (twin)
 37 Lois Turner Horne (twin) m. Norman Kemp
- 17 **HAROLD ALBRITTON TURNER** Born 24 Mar 1900
 Married Rubie Rowe
 38 Gerald Edgar Turner
 39 Bernard Edward Turner
 40 Max harold Turner
- 18 **ULPHIAN GRAY TURNER, JR.** Born 1909

- 19 **DANIEL WALTER TURNER** Born 1915
 41 Son
 42 Son
 43 Son
 44 Daughter
- 20 **VESTA MAY TURNER** Born 1 Sept 1905
Married Burdell Myrick
 45 Ann Myrick
 46 Noel Myrick
- 21 **ERNEST VASCO TURNER, JR.** Born 31 July 1909
Married Frances
 47 Ernest Vasco Turner III
 48 Leslie Turner
 49 Gertrude Turner
- 22 **ELIZABETH TURNER** Born 1 Feb 1912
Married Max Long
 50 Max Long Jr.
 51 Pierce Long
 52 Wayne Long
- 23 **LILLIAN TURNER** Born 15 Jan 1915
Married F. Bascom Bullard
 53 Fred Bullard
 54 June Bullard
- 24 **IRIS AMBA TURNER** Born 30 Nov 1927 Lives in Maxwell
Married 1– Afton Rauls
 2– Irving Diaz
 55 Mickey, female by first marriage
 56 Fredericka Diaz
 57 Victoria Diaz
 58 Carroll Diaz (female)
 59 Belinda Diaz

The Florida Times Union's edition on Sunday, September 24, 1933, carried a picture of the Long-Turner Bridal Party at Macclenny. The photo and article are printed here in part.



September 1933 wedding of Miss Elizabeth Turner and Max Long. Said to be one of the largest weddings ever held in Baker County. Married in First Methodist Church, Macclenny, Florida.

A beautiful program of music was played before the ceremony: At Dawning sung by Paul Tanner of Jacksonville, and O Promise Me and I Love You Truly sung by Mrs. Mary Louise Forrester of Lake City. They were accompanied by Mildred Null of Lake City, organist. During the ceremony hearts and Flowers was played softly on the violin by Frank Dorman, Jr. The groomsmen were: Vasco Turner, brother of the bride, Floyd Howell, Burdell Myrick of Chestnut, Illinois and Bascomb Bullard. The four bridesmaids were: Mrs. Bascom Bullard, Baldwin, sister of the bride; Mrs. Paul Tanner, Jacksonville, cousin of the bride; Mrs. John Gutsey, Glen St. Mary and Miss Thelma McLeod. The matron of honor, Mrs. Vesta Myrick of Chestnut, Illinois sister of the bride entered alone. The two little flower girls, Iris Turner and Reva Elliott, were dressed in white organdies. The ring bearer was Joe Barber, the tiny son of the C.M. Barbers. He was dressed in long white satin trousers and satin blouse.

Members of the wedding party of Mr. and Mrs. Max Long, whose marriage was a social event of Macclenny at the First Methodist Church in Macclenny Wednesday evening.

Back Row: , left to right: Mary Louise Forrester of Lake City, Mrs. F.R. Null of Lake City, Mrs. Thelma Getsey of Glen St. Mary, Eddie Joe Long of University of Florida; Burdell Myrick of Chesnut, Ill; Bascomb Bullard of Baldwin, Frank J. Dorman of Jacksonville, Vasco Turner of Macclenny; Lloyd Howell of Lawtey.

Second Row: Mrs. Paul Tanner of Jacksonville; Mrs. E.V. Turner, mother of the bride; Mr. and Mrs. Max Long, E.V. Turner, father of the bride; Mrs. Lillian Bullard of Baldwin, sister of the bride; Mrs. Vesta Myrick of Chesnut Ill., sister of the bride; Thelma McLeod of Macclenny.

Front Row: Iris Turner, sister of the bride; flower girl, Joe Barber and Reva Elliott.

MISS ELIZABETH TURNER WEDS MAX S. LONG IN BEAUTIFUL CEREMONY AT MACCLENNY

Macclenny, Sept 23, 1933---Marked by social dignity and distinguished beauty, the wedding of Miss Elizabeth Turner, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E.V. Turner of Macclenny, and Max Steve Long, son of S.P. Long and the late Mrs. Long of Meigs, Georgia, which was solemnized at 7 o'clock Wednesday night, September 20, in the First Methodist Church of Macclenny, centers the interest of a wide circle of friends. Rev. Finley J. Patterson, pastor of the Springfield Methodist Church of Jacksonville, performed the impressive ceremony in the presence of a large gathering of friends and relatives of the young couple.

The quaint old chapel was bordered with pink radiance roses and Southern smilax. The alter was intertwined with garlands of southern smilax and rosebuds and tall pedestal baskets filled with those flowers stood at each end of the chancel. An archway of roses and smilax, under which the musicians entered, was erected at one side.

A beautiful program of music was played before the ceremony: **At Dawning** sung by Paul Tanner of Jacksonville, and **O Promise Me and I Love You Truly** sung by Mrs. Mary Louise Forrester of Lake City. They were accompanied by Mildred Null of Lake City, organist. During

the ceremony **Hearts and Flowers** was played softly on the violin by Frank Dorman, Jr.

The groomsmen were: Vasco Turner, brother of the bride, Floyd Howell, Burdell Myrick of Chestnut, Illinois and Bascomb Bullard. The four bridesmaids were: Mrs. Bascom Bullard, Baldwin, sister of the bride; Mrs. Paul Tanner, Jacksonville, cousin of the bride; Mrs. John Gutsey, Glen St. Mary and Miss Thelma McLeod.

The matron of honor, Mrs. Vesta Myrick of Chestnut, Illinois sister of the bride entered alone. The two little flowers girls, Iris Turner and Reva Elliott, were dressed in white organdies. The ring bearer was Joe Barber, the tiny son of the C.M. Barbers. He was dressed in long white satin trousers and satin blouse.

Immediately after the ceremony a reception was held at the home of the bride's parents. The guests were received in the living room of the old Southern home, decorated in roses and fern. A special musical program was rendered.

Assisting in serving were Miss Vernon Tutt, Miss Annie Laurie Robinson, and Miss Lois Watson.

The bride comes from a distinguished lineage of ancestors who were prominent in civic, educational and political circles of the state.

Mr. Long, of Olustee, was born in Valdosta, he graduated from the University of Alabama where he was prominent in athletic circles, and is now secretary and treasurer of Howell Turpentine Company of Olustee.

The Baker County Press September 22, 1933

POPULAR COUPLE HONORED

Mrs. T.M. Dorman and Miss Thelma McLeon were joint hostesses Friday evening at the home of Mrs. Dorman, entertaining with six tables of bridge honoring Miss Elizabeth Turner and Max Long, whose marriage will be an event of September 20.

The spacious rooms were opened en suite and tastefully decorated, and the color scheme of pink and white being carried out. An ice course was served with miniature wedding cakes.

Prizes for high prizes were presented to Mrs. E.L. Steele and Tate Powell, Jr., low to Mrs. H.F. Powers and Jim Terhell.

Present were the Tate Powell Jr, Harold Turners, E.L. Steeles, Jim Terhells, H.F. Powers', John Geitgeys, B.N. Myricks, Mary Clifton, Misses Annie Laurie Robinson, Margaret Haire, Vernon Tutt, Patsy Brinson, Vasco Turner, T.M. Dorman, Pete Brinson, Frank Dorman, Jr.

*More about the Turner family can be obtained by consulting the publication TURNER: Ancient Family of Norman-French Origin by Lois E. Patterson, Marietta, New York. Also the Baker County Historical Society, P.O. Box 856 in Macclenny, Fl. 32063 for additional information.



**Left: Casey Dinkins
Right: Elgin Barnes
Baker County Historical
Society**

**1994 Baker
County
Historical
Society
Macclenny,
Florida
formerly the
old jail**



Elgin J. Barnes

THE BAKER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 856 Macclenny, Florida 32063

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FAMILY HISTORY COMPILATIONS

Among the many family histories compiled in the Historical Society are:

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**Left: Cathy
Right: Tonda
In front of Mercantile**

**Left: Cathy
Right: Tonda**



The Historic Franklin Mercantile

For decades it has stood guard, watching over the serene and peaceful little town of Glen St. Mary. Through two world wars, the Great Depression, and natural disasters, The Franklin Mercantile has remained steadfast, a tribute to the quality of life of a by-gone era.

Although the exact construction date of the stately two-story building is unknown, the main portion is believed to have been built prior to 1897. From the spring of 1911, Jesse Earl Franklin and his family lived here in the family quarters with its neighborly front porch swing and inviting rocking chairs amid a wide variety of the family's beautiful plants and blooming flowers. They operated a general mercantile and post office in the main building until Earl's retirement as postmaster in 1959. He and his wife, Miss Sally, are still fondly remembered by many today.

Playing a significant role in the development of the community, the Mercantile served as the social and commercial center of town, affording the local folks news from far away places, as well as necessary provisions of the day. With the train depot just across the railroad tracks, the Franklin Mercantile was truly a gathering place. After Earl's death in 1968, though, it seems as if time stood still there.

Year after year, the talented Tomlinson sisters, Tonda Griffis and Cathy Mendolera, like so many others, were smitten with the grand old building and often stood in awe and gazed inquisitively at the curious old, rugged and aged structure with the inviting homespun balcony. It finally dawned on them; this could be the perfect setting for an old-time general store again.

With the help of Earl's only son, Cecil Franklin, the sisters' dream became a reality and in 1992, after 81 years in the Franklins' possession, the Mercantile began a new chapter in its history.

Today, the grand old edifice is surrounded in a sentimental atmosphere, overflowing with elegance and charm. It is a showcase for the handiwork of local artists, craftsmen and writers.

Old fashioned rocking chairs deck the porch with folksy charm, while inside an inviting and challenging checkerboard summons you to play a game. An assortment of local history books bids you to relax and recall the past.

“Miss Kathryn’s Parlor” invites one to browse among a wide selection of antiques and collectibles. The cupboard in “Granny’s Kitchen” is filled with a wide variety of archaic and Depression Era dishes, kitchen gadgets and rare curios of days past.



Left: Cathy
Right: Tonda

Most unique is the “Man-tiques” room, catering to the masculine collector or browser, and set apart from the woman’s world of antiquated relics.

Visitors shop to strains of nostalgic melodies intermingled with the aromas of mulling spices and potpourri. Occasionally, you are treated to a slice of Cathy’s old-timey bread pudding and always the charm of the two radiant sisters.

Whatever you are looking for, or hoping to see, you’ll most likely find it, and more, at The Historic Franklin Mercantile.

The sisters invite you to come stroll down memory lane with them at Franklin Mercantile. You’re sure to enjoy the visit and return again and again with your friends.

Call (904) 259-6040 for more information.

The store is opened Wednesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have asked me how I became interested in writing, especially as it developed into so many varied phases: diaries, journals, poetry, songs, letters, short stories, features, interviews and on and on. So this is that story because

I owe a debt of gratitude and acknowledgement to many people who have paved the way for me to do the work I have always loved and had an avid interest in.

Through my paternal lineage there has been a succession of writers, some famous and some, like me, who write for the enjoyment and fulfillment it brings. To those who came before me I owe much for my endowment.

Edgar Lee Masters, a great American writer, and I share a great grandfather Notley Masters. It has been said by many that his literary offerings changed the course of American literature. He is best known among his countless contributions for his Spoon River Anthology, and he has written verses, songs and satires. World Book encyclopedia says "his writing style is that of his own instead of regular form. His works reflect that of his life and his portrayal of characters is remarkable."

I regret to say I've never read his many contributions although I have an autographed copy of "Across Spoon River" about our Masters family.....a gift from his son Hilary, also a writer. Colleagues and educators have told me that we possess the same style and characterization of writing skills, and for those observations I am humbled. My narratives, in whatever form, are not written with any thought of achieving literary distinction. Far from it. It is merely an effort to leave in some form of preservation things of a much simpler and less hurried, less harried age. Things we may be too busy to sit and listen to now yet will want to know in later years. In tracing the Master's family tree, I have interviewed many members of this family who possess writing

skills and are adept at writing family sketches just as Edgar, though they are not as famous. Like me, they are amateurs who do it for the love and enjoyment of it. Before my Uncle Homer Moore died, he wrote me long descriptive discourses on members of our family that he knew personally, but who died long before I was born. His sister, my Aunt Ruth Campbell, wrote a book, like Edgar, on the family, for the love and fun of it. My favorite letters are shared with Aunt Ruth's granddaughters, Suzanne Banks Potts, and Marilyn Banks Horn, of Atlanta Georgia. Their lively descriptions of people, places and things, are more vividly portrayed than any famous authors I have read. Therefore, I firmly believe that my Father in Heaven has given this particular family talents with a mission. I'm very proud to say too, that all three of my children keep journals and family records, all three write poetry and interesting descriptive letters. My daughter Teri is editor of her company's newsletter. When Teri's daughter, Kayla, was only two she discovered my pictorial journal on the dining table, grabbed a pen, and quickly made her writing debut directly on top of what I had written and illustrated with photos. I was so thrilled to think she might be the next family scribe that I couldn't very well get upset with her. And how thrilled I was when my 11 year old granddaughter Tabitha requested a diary for Christmas, and my 10 year old grandson Ryan asked for a journal. Of course, I honored their request. Tabitha, who is a 7th generation Baker Countian, became a Middle School columnist/reporter for The Baker County Standard and did a great job. Her award winning poem, What I Want To Be, is published in the 1990 Baker County-Wide Homecoming book. So I am very grateful for my heritage.

Had it not been for my mother, Blanche Fraser Moore, moving to North Carolina when I was twelve I might never have thought about writing professionally. It was there, in Wilmington, that I lived across the street from a girl, my age, who wrote a column about teen-agers for the local paper. When I returned to Macclenny in 1950 and entered the sophomore class, I approached Mr. Tate Powell, Sr. and his son, Tate Jr. about doing a column called "High School Highlights". They gave me my first job...without pay of course. It was so much fun that I extended it into the summer months as "Teen Times". When I graduated

from Macclenny-Glen High School, Tate, Jr. offered to send me to college to pursue writing, but I was not in a position to consider his offer. A few years later, after I began my marriage and children, I wrote a column for him called, "News and Views" that contained the comings and goings of Baker Countians and the local social activities. Sometimes I added a "Citizen of the Week" to my column, highlighting senior citizens. I worked free but when my family began to expand, and I had no money for baby sitters, I reluctantly gave it up. Mr. Powell called me up and said he had people 'storming my door in protest that your writing has ceased' so he offered me \$10 a month to continue. That was a lot of money in 1957. It was enough to pay some one \$1.25 for a whole afternoon to sit with my napping children and clean my house too while I went out getting news and doing interviews.

But that all ended when we moved away from Baker County and I chose to devote the next two decades to being a homemaker and writing for personal enjoyment.

In the late 1970s I became a close friend of Nancy Weir, Food Editor for the Florida Times Union. Nancy read a story I wrote on Emily (Davis) (Mrs. Clede) Harvey from Baker County. She shared the story with Doreen Sharkey, her editor in Lifestyle, who in turn obtained permission from me to publish it in the cooking section of a Thursday's edition of The Florida Times Union.

The story received an immediate response from the public who requested the paper print more such stories. Doreen asked me to become the Country Cooking feature writer for the Lifestyle section. Many of the stories I wrote are about Baker Countians.

To Nancy and Doreen I owe a debt of gratitude. And for our continuing friendship I am grateful.

In addition to the Country Cooking features, Nancy had paved the way for me to meet the Week-End Editor, Elvin Henson, about writing a column on genealogy. At first he was reluctant to hire someone inexperienced in journalism, but after the story on Emily Harvey appeared he gave me the chance to write for him. For his confidence in giving me an opportunity to become a regular columnist for The Florida Times Union I shall forever be thankful. The chance has given me an enormous amount of opportunities and wonderful experiences

through the years. Though he has retired, we keep in touch and share a friendship that I treasure. In addition, Mr. Henson published multitudinous of my week-end feature stories, on front page and in color. I wrote about people from all walks of life.....and found the experience exhilarating.

I had the same experience writing for the Times-Union Features Department. It was Features Editor, Ripley Hotch, who first mentioned that I should consider publishing my stories in a book. He told me that the portions of my features being edited for space were too good to be lost. He encouraged me to keep my hard copy and consider publishing them complete with all the information I had gathered.

And had it not been for the opportunity Lifestyle Editor, Norm Going, gave me to interview Loretta Lynn, I might have never gained the confidence to interview and write about other celebrities like Alex Haley, Donna Fargo, Conway Twitty and Pat Summerall. For Norm's confidence, I am indeed indebted.

To Bill Roach, who has edited Volumes III, IV, and V of the Once Upon a Lifetime series for me, I am equally indebted. He was one of my professors at the University of North Florida. Since he and his wife Chris share an interest in genealogy, we became friends, and have remained so over the years. I deeply appreciate all the assistance and counsel he so willingly gives me.

And even with all the above, this book and any others that follow, may not have been possible without the love and devotion, patience and caring shown by my son Zac. When I first began writing for the Times Union I used an old, very old, manuel typewriter. Zac encouraged me to get an electric type writer, but I was afraid of power failure and not meeting a deadline. So he just walked in one day with a top of the line Olivetti and said, 'just try it Mom'. I kept it, and couldn't imagine life without it, but I also kept that old manuel 'just in case'. Then the computer age dawned, and Zac was telling me I needed a computer. Once again I wouldn't hear of something that 'might break down', or in computer language, 'crash', and leave me stranded. In 1992 when I received one for Christmas, I knew it was Zac who had put it on Santa's list. Today, I can't even imagine this book, or any other thing I

write, going to print with out it. Zac has furnished me software, and any assistance, I may need on the computer, but it is for his patience and empathy (my computer and I have a very long way to go before we understand each other), and support that I am most grateful.

The One I shall give the most credit is my Heavenly Father. He has provided me with all these good friends, opportunities and counsel, for which I am void of expression when it comes to verbalizing my deep and heartfelt gratitude. It is to Him that I give all the honor, and credit that may ever come for this work.

La Viece (Moore-Fraser) Smallwood 1995

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MUSIC

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Who Am I

Tattered Box

